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ABSTRACT

The conference addressed a trend in the education of minority students in Florida and the nation. While high school graduation rates of minorities have increased, minority enrollment in postsecondary education has decreased. A statewide study of 811 randomly selected high school seniors was undertaken to identify variables which may influence a student's decision to attend college. The study appears in its entirety in this monograph and addresses such topics as: the relationship among variables like career aspirations, career goals, and aspiration to attend college; the relationship between variables related to family circumstances and aspiration toward college; and the relationship between gender and educational and academic variables. Discussion of the findings related to these topics served as the focal point for the conference. Study findings include the following: more than 70% of the respondents wanted to go to college, but only 31.9% of them applied; the vast majority of those surveyed believe college is necessary for success and want a good job in 5 years earning over $20,000; and family circumstances were related to aspiration to attend college (students from families earning over $20,000 per year tended to want to go to college more frequently). More majority students' fathers had gone to college, were in managerial or professional positions, and had a total family income of over $20,000 per year. Almost identical numbers of minority and majority students applied for college. (SM)

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THE SECOND ANNUAL COLLEGE REACH-OUT CONFERENCE

Sponsored by
THE FLORIDA INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
and
THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
COLLEGE REACH-OUT PROGRAM

The Delta Court of Flags
Orlando, Florida
May 4-6, 1988

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A Dedication

Dr. Andrew A. Robinson, Jr.

With fondness, admiration, and respect, we dedicate this monograph to Andrew A. Robinson, Jr., who founded and organized the Florida Institute of Education in 1982 and served as its director until his death on February 27, 1988.

Dr. Robinson was quite aware that our society today is an "information society" where one's very existence is dependent upon the quality and accuracy of the information that must be processed, evaluated, and applied. To this end, he unequivocally insisted upon the greatest possible dissemination of information related to education in our society. It was indeed he who saw the need to provide conferees and educators throughout the state and nation with bound copies of the major ideas, strategies, and arguments generated and presented during each conference.

Those of us who knew Dr. Robinson well know that he was a master at setting realistic and visionary goals, supervising relevant activities, and evaluating progress and outcomes. He was able to instill in us the need to set the highest personal and professional standards. Like Reichel, he believed that "not unless we fill our existence with our aim do we make it life."

One of FIE's most salient aims continues to be helping educationally disadvantaged students become prepared for college. In Dr. Robinson's words:

> *It is not enough to view with alarm the plight of educationally disadvantaged students. The Institute is proud of its role in working with schools, colleges, and universities in a planned, systematic program designed to provide for student motivation, enhanced academic preparation and counseling, and effective advising for students and parents.*

It was Dr. Robinson's disdain for procrastination that catapulted him into leadership that was marked by energy, initiative, and reason — all qualities thought by the Greek philosopher Plato to be requisite for educational leadership. It was with energy, initiative, and reason, therefore, that Dr. Robinson sought to irradicate the barriers which hinder disadvantaged and disenfranchised students from pursuing and successfully completing programs in postsecondary institutions.

As we look at the research questions that serve as the impetus for this monograph, it becomes apparent that family and community environment, socio-economic status, quality schooling, motivation, and peer and familial expectations, determine to a large extent who takes advantage of postsecondary education. It was clear that Dr. Robinson believed that — to paraphrase Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. — the leaders of humankind who could help the disadvantaged should act like thermostats rather than thermometers.

To know Dr. Robinson was to know a man who caused things to happen; he did not stand by only to record the climate of the hour. Rather, he moved swiftly like the gales, moving, guiding, and maneuvering — all for the sake of ensuring excellence in education for all citizens. This excellence in education, he felt, would provide for its people vision — a vision that would lead to an education, as Carter G. Woodson relates, that would "inspire people to live more abundantly, to learn to begin with life as they find it and make it better."

Dr. Robinson was not selfish with his vision; he reached out. He reached out to knowledge and learning. He reached out to children and adults. He reached out to the future, a future he — along the way — helped shape. Dr. Robinson, we now reach out to you ...

Lives of great men all remind us
We can make our lives sublime,
And, departing, leave behind us
Footprints on the sands of time;

Footprints, that perhaps another,
sailing o'er life's solemn main,

A forlorn and shipwrecked brother,
Seeing, shall take heart again;

Let us, then, be up and doing,
With a heart for any fate;
Still achieving, still pursuing,
Learn to labor and to wait.

— *Henry Wadsworth Longfellow*

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PREFACE

This monograph serves to summarize the proceedings of the 1988 College Reach-Out Conference. The conference, held in Orlando, Florida, May 5-8, followed the format initiated last year -- that is —a statewide meeting sponsored by the Florida Institute of Education and the State of Florida Department of Education College Reach-Out Program. The conference was attended by more than 150 concerned students, parents, and educators representing Florida's schools, community colleges and public and private universities.

The focus of the conference was to address a disquieting trend in the education of minority students in Florida and the nation. Specifically, while high school graduation rates of minorities have been increasing, minority enrollment in postsecondary education has been decreasing. In October, 1987, the Florida Institute of Education received a grant from the Florida Department of Education's Reach-Out Program to initiate a research study designed to identify variables which may influence students' decision to attend college. This statewide study involved administering a questionnaire to over 800 high school seniors from 31 high schools in 20 school districts throughout Florida's five scholastic regions. School personnel assisted in data collection by providing information from each student's academic record. The study, entitled "Variables Affecting High School Seniors' Aspirations and Decisions to Attend College," appears in its entirety in this monograph and addresses the following questions:

(1) Is there a relationship between variables such as parental expectations, peer influence, parents' education, parents' occupation, and aspiration to attend college? And decision to apply for college?
(2) Is there a relationship among variables such as career aspirations, career goals, and aspiration to attend college? And decision to apply for college?
(3) Is there a relationship between academic variables such as course of study, feelings about high school, feelings about being prepared for college, and aspiration to go to college? And decision to apply for college?
(4) Is there a relationship between variables related to family circumstances and aspiration to go to college? And decision to apply for college?
(5) Is there a relationship between experiences in school, extracurricular activities, and aspiration to go to college? And decision to apply for college?
(6) Is there a relationship between access to guidance and counseling and aspiration to go to college? And decision to apply for college?
(7) Is there a relationship between minority versus majority group membership and selected family, academic, career, and financial variables?
(8) Is there a relationship betwen residing in an urban versus rural environment and selected academic and educational variables?
(9) Is there a relationship between gender and selected educational and academic variables?

Discussion and examination of the findings related to these questions served as the focal point for this year's conference. A group of respected educators was identified to serve as panelists at the conference, and each member of this group was asked to respond to one or more questions associated with variables identified in the research questions. They presented their responses at the conference in two general sessions. Participants shared ideas and information and discussed how the findings and recommendations might be used to strengthen activities designed to address the goals of the College Reach-Out Program.

Highlights of the conference included the Keynote Address by Florida Board of Regents member Cecil B. Keene, and luncheon presentations by Dr. Lana D. Muraskin, Senior Policy Analyst, National Assessment of Vocational Education, Washington, D.C., and Ms. Lillie Shelton, Assistant to the Chancellor and Director, Equal Opportunity Programs, Tallahassee, Florida. On Thursday evening, May 5, conference participants attended the Annual Frederick H. Schultz Distinguished Lecture Series where they heard Governor William Clinton of Arkansas discuss the vital link between educational policy and economic development.

Participants were asked to complete an evaluation instrument regarding the content and management of the conference and Dr. Rosilynn King, President, Information Research Network Service, Washington, D.C., served as outside evaluator. Her evaluation is included in this publication.

The conference would not have been possible without the cooperation of Dr. Jack Tebo, Director, Postsecondary Education Planning Unit. We thank him for his constant guidance and commitment. We would also like to thank Mr. Clark Maxwell, Jr., Executive Director, Community College System, Chancellor Charles B. Reed, State University System, and Commissioner of Education Betty Castor for their continued support of this and other Institute activities. It is only through sharing of resources and ideas that we will achieve our common goal of expanding educational opportunity in the State of Florida.

We look forward with great anticipation to next year's Third Annual College Reach-Out Conference. Meanwhile, we must continue our efforts to make education a community concern and search for new and exciting ways to involve parents, business leaders, and community groups in the educational process. There is no greater priority than preparing our young people to meet the challenges of the future.

VARIABLE AFFECTING HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS' ASPIRATIONS AND DECISION TO ATTEND COLLEGE

FLORIDA INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
Jacksonville, Florida

1988

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

A study of this magnitude would have been impossible to complete without the commitment and cooperation of many people across the State of Florida, including the Commissioner of Education, Betty Castor, who endorsed the study through a letter to each of the superintendents of schools in the counties involved in the study.

Prior to the beginning of this study in the late summer of 1987, Dr. Omega Gardner, of the University of West Florida, completed a pilot study titled "Myths and Realities of Perceived Opportunities to Higher Education by Black High School Graduates." The Review of Related Literature conducted for the pilot study by Dr. Gardner and his associate, Mrs. Anne-Marie Armstrong, served as the review of literature for this study, and much of the Introduction was prepared by Dr. Gardner.

Dr. Gardner also served as the supervisor and coordinator of the case study component of the study, with the assistance of Dr. Betty Meers, Research Associate for the Florida Institute of Education, and Mrs. Ethel Brooks, Coordinator of the Precollegiate Program, Florida Institute of Education.

Mr. Brooks planned and carried out the procedures for gaining entry into the schools in order to conduct the research; developed and carried out training sessions for the survey administrators; arranged for the counselors who participated in the data gathering process; maintained the requisite paperwork in connection with the stipends for counselors and survey administrators; and, with Dr. Meers, traveled to various parts of the state to train administrators, and to administer the survey, as well.

Dr. Meers developed the survey questionnaire used in the study, and worked closely with Mrs. Brooks in setting up and carrying out the procedural components of the study. She designed the initial data analyses procedures, interpreted the results for presentation at the College Reach-Out Conference; and wrote the preliminary draft of the Method and Results portions of the study.

Mr. Jeff Wittig, Research Assistant for the Institute, was responsible for input of the data and worked closely with Mr. Eric Reinhardt of the University of North Florida Computer Center in applying statistical analyses to the data. Special appreciation goes to Mr. Reinhardt for his prompt response to deadlines and his willingness to assist in all stages of the data analysis procedures.

Mr. Wittig also assisted with all of the procedural steps and maintained the files as information was returned to the Institute. He subsequently coordinated the final review of the study, and was responsible for production of the monograph of the proceedings of the College Reach-Out Conference, in which this study is printed.

Dr. Roy Singleton, Jr. edited Reach-Out Conference panelists' presentations for their inclusion in this monograph, edited the in-depth case studies, and wrote the Dedication.

Mrs. Linda McClintock, Assistant to the Director of the Institute, provided administrative support and saw to it that the fiscal resources needed for the study were available.

The Institute's clerical support staff worked quietly behind the scenes, but without their help, the myriad details associated with a study of this nature would have been impossible. Mrs. Maggie Anderson, Mrs. Betty Bowers, Mrs. LaVonne Frison, Mrs. Gerry Stage, and Mrs. Marge Sundby contributed many hours of dedicated work toward the completion of the study.

Dr. Robert Stakenas, Associate Director of Florida State University's Center for Needs Assessment and Planning, conducted a comprehensive data analysis and provided valuable insight and assistance in preparing the final draft of the study.

Space does not permit naming all who should be credited with the success of this study. Dedicated educators across the State participated in the data collection process. Superintendents, principals, classroom teachers, and guidance counselors took time from busy schedules to help arrange for the collection of data in their schools. The survey administrators traveled widely to ensure that each region of the State was included in the study. Their deep concern for education of Florida's young people led them to give of themselves without regard for personal remuneration.

The research would not have been possible without the students and their parents who graciously consented to participate in the study. Across the state, survey administrators were met by interested, enthusiastic young people who willingly shared their personal thoughts by completing the survey questionnaire.

Finally, those who worked so diligently on this study are saddened that the untimely death of the Institute's Director, Dr. Andrew A. Robinson, robbed him of the opportunity to share in the final stages of the study. This study was special to Dr. Robinson, who was ever concerned that educational opportunities be available for all who would benefit from them. May this study stand as a lasting tribute to the Director, whose caring knew no bounds.

ABSTRACT

While greater numbers of minority students are completing high school successfully, fewer of them are continuing their education in a postsecondary setting. Recently, advisory groups such as the State's Advisory Committee on the Education of Blacks and the Postsecondary Education Planning Commission have expressed the need for increased efforts to enhance the participation of blacks and other minorities in postsecondary education.

This study surveyed 811 randomly selected high school seniors to gain information regarding the variables which influenced their decision whether to continue their education beyond high school. These students completed a questionnaire which asked them to provide information regarding academic, motivational, demographic, and economic characteristics. Data from the students' permanent files were also collected; these data included: GPA, tests taken, courses completed, and other relevant data.

Data were analyzed using an independent samples chi square test to compare the responses of: those who had applied to a college, those who aspired to go to college but had not applied, and those who had decided not to continue their education; minority versus majority students, urban versus rural students; and male versus female students.

It was found that over 70% of the respondents said they wanted to go to college, but only 31.9% of them had actually applied. The figure of 31.9% approximates the percentage (34%) of students who enrolled for college in Florida in 1986. Aspirations to attend college were related to parental expectations, parents' education, and the father's occupation.

The vast majority of the survey sample believes that college is necessary for success and wants a good job in five years earning over $20,000 per year. The majority of students aspiring to go to college believe that their high school has prepared them for college.

Family circumstances were related to aspiration to attend college. Students from families earning an income of over $20,000 per year tended to want to go to college more frequently than those from families earning less than $20,000.

Several differences between majority and minority students were found. More majority students' fathers had gone to college, were in managerial or professional positions, and total family income was greater than $20,000 per year. On the other hand, minority families were less likely to have two parents in the home and more likely have a larger number of children dependent on the breadwinner(s). A larger proportion of minority students said that they planned to join the military after graduation.

In spite of these differences, almost identical numbers of minority and majority students applied for college. One of the largest racial differences was in academic achievement where it was found that majority students in the sample had an average GPA of 2.54 compared to 1.79 for minority students. Minority students tended to discuss career plans with counselors more frequently while majority students reported discussing college plans more frequently. Differences were found between urban versus rural, and male versus female students in many of these areas, also.

Surprisingly, students reported obtaining information about college admissions and financial aid more frequently from printed brochures than from either counselors or teachers. While many students believed that they would be able to obtain financial aid, financing a college education was an important area of concern.

INTRODUCTION

Americans have traditionally valued the acquisition of formal education, for it provides the key to economic and social advancement. One measure of educational attainment is the number of years of school completed. Bureau of Census data show that in 1987, 26.1% of the adult U.S. population had not completed high school, whereas the percentage of black adults who had not completed high school was 40.2% During this same period, 19.4% of all Americans had completed four or more years of college, while only 11.1% of blacks were college graduates. Although some academic gains were made in the 1960s and 1970s, black enrollment in postsecondary education has shown recent declines.

The statistics for the State of Florida are comparable to those at the national level. With its expanded community college system and state university system, Florida has addressed problems associated with access from a geographic perspective. Many problems related to economics, motivation, and academic preparation have not been addressed, however, to the satisfaction of those who plan for the education of Florida's youth.

This study was designed to determine whether there are specific economic, motivational, or academic barriers which decrease black and other minority participation in postsecondary education.

THE PROBLEM

In Florida and other parts of the nation, there is a major concern over the growing underrepresentation of blacks in postsecondary education. One need not look far to document that the number of black students who are choosing to continue their postsecondary education is declining. In spite of the fact that black high school graduation rates have slightly more than doubled since 1940, several studies have pointed to a decline in the number of black high school graduates who go on to college.

The National Education Association (NEA) reported that even though minorities total some 21 percent of the U.S. population, minority enrollments in two- and four-year colleges remain at 17 percent. Bureau of census data show that, in 1984-85, 19.4% of Florida high school graduates were black. During this same period, first-time-in-college enrollment for blacks in Florida public universities and community colleges was 11%. Further, Florida Department of Education statistics reveal that although there is a steady decline in black representation in higher education enrollments from the freshmen to the senior year, the greatest loss occurs between high school graduation and college entrance.

When viewed in conjunction with projected labor market requirements, the significance of educational attainment becomes apparent. According to a report from the Hudson Institute, increased educational achievement will be required to compete successfully in tomorrow's labor force. In 1984, only 22 percent of jobs required four or more years of college. In the year 2000, it is projected that 30% of jobs will require four or more years of college. In other words, many occupations having rapid growth rates will require more education and training. If black (and other minority) students are to be competitive in the changing labor market, they must continue their education beyond the high school level.

The literature regarding black participation in postsecondary education reveals that there are no simple answers to the question of declining black enrollments in postsecondary education. A number of variables interact and contribute to students' aspirations and decisions with regard to participating in postsecondary education. These variables may be classified as falling into three major categories: academic, motivational, and demographic/economic.

This research study examined some of the possible economic, motivational, and academic variables which are related to students' aspirations and decisions to pursue a postsecondary education. The use of both majority and minority students in the study permitted comparisons by race. The study addressed two broad questions: (1) Is there a relationship between selected academic, motivational, economic, and demographic variables and aspiration to attend college?; and (2) Is there a relationship between selected academic, motivational, economic, and demographic variables and the decision to apply to a college? These two broad questions were decomposed into more specific research questions. These research questions are presented in the section on results.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Two recent studies have addressed the factors associated with college attendance of high school graduates. Borus and Carpenter (1984), using data and interviews collected for the Department of Labor in the 1979-80 National Longitudinal Survey, identified variables associated with college attendance. Data collected included attitudes, school background, school environment, and individual characteristics. Variables which were found to be significant for college attendance were: age of student (older), father's education, foreign birth of mother, lack of immediate marriage plans, high score on Control Over Environment Scale, and attendance at religious activities. Other variables which were associated with going directly to college were: completing an academic curriculum in high school; not being behind the modal grade and not having had remedial education; attending a school with 1000-1749 students; and finally, if minority, attending a school where that minority was more than 10 percent of the total population.

Variables which were *not* statistically significant in the Borus and Carpenter study were: race, residence in a rural or central city, having had a child, having substantial reading material in the home, absence of parent at age 14, number of siblings, unemployment status of youth, local unemployment rate, intention to join the military, intention to work at age 35, school satisfaction, funding level and school type. Nonetheless, variables which were not significantly related to college attendance were thought to be correlated with other variables, notably family characteristics.

Baird (1984) compared College Board file information, the educational plans and other relevant characteristics of students with different combinations of family income and test scores. There were 3200 participants in his study. Baird concluded that among the SAT test-takers "applicants from families of whatever wealth generally obtain admission to college. Likewise, in this sample, applicants at *every score level* (emphasis added) also generally obtained admission to college" (p. 393). The role of SAT scores was analyzed and tested against the variables of family income, sex, admissions, ethnic group and academic rank. In summing, Baird said, "The results of this study provide some support for the idea that the SAT may be generally serving the purposes its makers hope it will serve, helping to identify talent, some which might be missed by other means" (p. 394).

Somewhat surprisingly, Baird's analysis revealed that blacks who took the SAT attended college with more frequency than whites. Regardless of SAT score, 97 percent of blacks and 90 percent of whites were attending a college within a year. Baird also found that blacks and Hispanics "used government aid, college aid, and their own employment to support their education considerably more frequently than whites" (p. 390).

Following reports that financial aid allocated for minorities was not being used, there was a push to make minorities more aware of such programs. Higgins (1984) analyzed responses of the 1980 senior class in the *High School and Beyond* study. This study included a stratified sample of over 28,000 seniors. The study investigated seniors and their aspirations for higher education, their plans to use various loan programs, work-study programs, scholarship, fellowship and other grant programs. A follow-up study pinpointed those who actually attended college. Higgins found that students attended college at approximately the same rate regardless of their knowledge of need-based programs (e.g., Basic Educational Opportunity Grants). Of those who did know about the programs, 77 percent attended college in 1980-81. Of those who did *not* know, 73 percent attended college in 1980-81. Similar patterns were found for the College Work-Study and the Guaranteed Student Loan programs.

Economics is a major factor in the decision to attend college, but the intervention of federal and state programs, and active promotion and publicizing of such programs in high schools and by college student aid offices, has succeeded in ameliorating this factor for many students.

Three studies on achieving black adolescents (Edwards, 1976; Timberlake, 1982; Lee, 1985) attempted to identify the resources which support academic success for this particular minority group. In some cases the findings were in agreement with studies of all high school youth; but some were not. These findings may indicate areas of special attention for high school counselors, teachers, advisors and college admissions officials.

In the first study cited above, Edwards profiled 21 academically successful students (with a GPA of 3.00 or better) from a large Midwestern urban high school. Most were female and their average

age was 16 years, 5 months, or at least one year ahead of age-grade progress. Edwards hypothesized that because they were younger "they are not fully accepted by their grade-level peers nor are they permitted equivalent freedom by their parents" resulting in more time for academics (p. 410). Only 11 of the 21 students lived with their natural parents and the average number of persons in households was 5.3. They had limited mobility aside from the usual shifts from elementary to junior to senior high. All had highly positive elementary school experiences and had a wide range of other positive experiences during their school years. They had access to help with school work, had regular domestic responsibility, and "their efforts are frequently reinforced by those of older siblings" through example and tangible assistance (p. 413). It was also found that 32 of the 40 parents involved in the study were born in the South. At this point, Edwards suspected that these academically successful blacks were actually a deviant subgroup of the dominant adolescent black subculture. The responses of the students to different attitude and belief scales revealed conformity to adult values and independence with respect to peers.

In the second study, Timberlake (1982) focused her study on the black female high school student who is perceived as a "potential dropout," yet who persists and graduates from high school. Her results show that the following variables significantly related to the subjects' persistence: student's age (17-18 age range compared to non-persisters who were either younger or older), nonparticipation in extracurricular activities on school grounds, involvement in church activities and employment while still in school.

In the third study, Lee (1985) investigated psychosocial variables associated with the educational development of black adolescents in a southern rural environment. Variables related to academic and social success for this cohort of rural black adolescents included:

1. Close supportive family networks with strong direction from parents;
2. Highly developed social network outside the family;
3. Strong identification with positive role models;
4. Active participation in school and church activities with limited activity in community activities;
5. Positive education experience with school providing the major social outlet;
6. Strong future orientation based on realism;
7. High educational and occupational goals and expectations;
8. Moderate to highly conservative moral attitudes;
9. Strong religious convictions;
10. Positive but realistic view of self with the ability to accept responsibility for self and behavior, the ability to both lead and follow, and an internal locus of control;
11. Well developed though somewhat limited interests;
12. Limited degree of black consciousness; and
13. Well developed views on the nature of success.

What these three studies have in common is a description of a network of variables mostly dependent and functioning from a strong family and/or church involvement which has been closely associated with the academic success of blacks in high school. Those blacks who persist and graduate from high school do, in all probability, have the support and encouragement of significant others. They have already experienced success and goal achievement.

Another factor which can affect college enrollment is the amount and type of career counseling experienced by the high school student. This counseling does not necessarily have to come from the school but is usually available or thought to be available through the high school guidance office.

Lee and Ekstrom (1987), using data from the first and second follow-ups of the *High School and Beyond* study, found that students from families low in socioeconomic status, from minority groups and from small rural schools are less likely to have access to guidance and counseling for making important decisions at the beginning of their high school careers. In addition, Lee and Ekstrom found that in the areas of selecting a curriculum track and planning a program of study, high school guidance counselors have limited involvement with students as a whole. They reported that:

> Less than one-fourth of all high school students selected a curriculum with any assistance from a counselor, and only about half of all high school students receive counselor

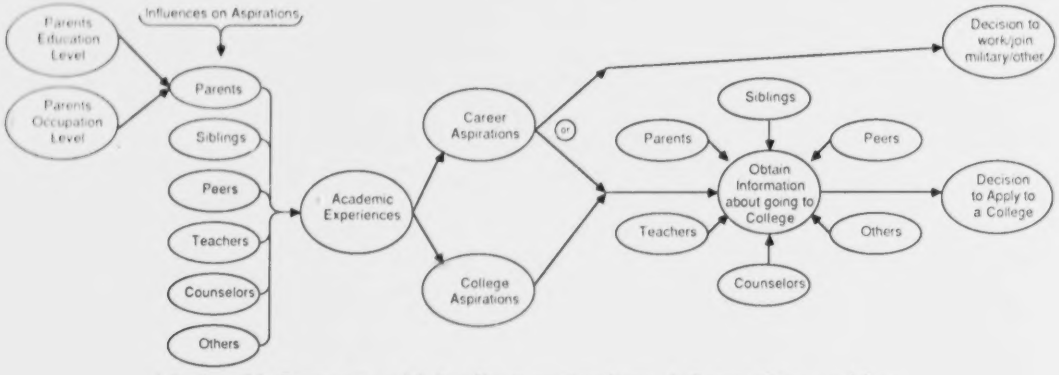
assistance in program planning. Moreover, only slightly more than half of all high school students have access to counseling for their plans after high school, that is, career and college counseling. These figures suggest that there is likely to be a group of students who might have either the ambition or the ability to attend college but who have no contact with a counselor until the end of their high school years. As a consequence, such students may not have entered a curriculum track providing preparation for college or, regardless of track placement, may not have taken courses that are either necessary or desirable preparation for college (p. 306).

The percentage of blacks enrolling in higher education has not changed significantly since 1976. While a recent report from the director of Equal Opportunity Programs for Florida's State University System pointed to a slight increase in the number of black students attending Florida's universities since 1985, it is anticipated that this trend will not continue because of sharp declines in the number of blacks receiving community college degrees and high school diplomas.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The conceptual framework underlying this study is shown in Figure 1. A conceptual framework identifies the important variables involved and how they are believed to be related. The variables which are identified provide the framework for the kinds of data that should be collected, the findings that could be expected on a theoretical basis, and how the results might be interpreted.

As shown in Figure 1, aspirations to attend college can be influenced by a variety of individuals. They include parents, peers, siblings, teachers, counselors, and other individuals who come to serve as role models or as significant others. Parents are potentially the most influential because of their societally given authority and influence as child rearers, providers, and role models. Whether parents



Kinds of influences which affect aspirations, information seeking and decision to attend college.

FIGURE 1

exert a positive influence on their children regarding pursuit of a college education may be related to their own aspirations and prior education level.

Through life experience and social interaction with others, young persons begin to evolve career aspirations and college aspirations. Frequently, college aspirations become fused with career aspirations because going to college is a prerequisite for entering professions such as teaching, medicine or law. But college aspirations can also be autonomous and function independently of career aspirations. For example, a student may aspire to go to college but, for a variety of reasons, ends up going to work after graduating from high school. Thus, the college aspiration has not been acted upon even though the individual holding it would have liked to pursue a postsecondary education — and may do so at some time in the future when circumstances are more favorable.

If students acquire an aspiration to attend college, they must seek information about which college to attend and what must be done to apply and be admitted. Thus, information acquisition is seen as a vital step in acting upon the aspiration to attend college. Information about going to college may be obtained from a variety of persons and sources. Persons who can supply such information include teachers, guidance counselors, parents, student peers, and others who are knowledgeable about the process. But human informants are not the only source of information. Published college guides and brochures are also frequently used resources in the information acquisition process.

Measuring aspiration to attend college can be done by asking respondents about their college-going intentions. But responses which produce self-reported intentions should not be treated as direct evidence that the student is actually college-bound. Measuring who is college bound is best done using behavioral indicators such as evidence that the student has actually taken the required admission test (e.g., the SAT or ACT), has actually submitted an application for admission, has received a formal statement of admission, or has paid an enrollment deposit.

The decision to apply to college is itself influenced by factors other than aspirations or information about colleges. Thus, personal factors based on personal experience can mediate the decision to apply for college admission. Personal factors include: liking to attend school, having confidence in one's ability to learn, the feeling that one is prepared for college, and ability to take tests successfully. Then there are situational factors such as having the financial resources available to pay for tuition. These factors, then, can mediate college aspirations as well as the decision to apply to a college.

Definition of Terms. Operational definitions for selected key terms include:

Student who aspires to attend college: Any subject who self-reports that he/she wishes to continue education after graduation from high school.

College bound student: Any subject who self-reports that he/she has submitted an application to a college or university.

Noncollege bound student: Any subject who self-reports having decided against continuing his/her education immediately following graduation from high school.

Urban school: Any school located in an inner city area of a district with a population of 150,000 or more.[1]

Rural school: Any school located in an area of a district with a population of less than 150,000 or any school located in an outlying area of a district with a population of 150,000 or more.

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

Three kinds of data were collected to provide answers to the research questions. They included: (1) data from a questionnaire administered to 883 students in randomly selected twelfth grade English classes; (2) demographic and academic information gathered from the participants' permanent record files; and (3) indepth case study interviews with 15 randomly selected interviewees.

A number of steps preceded the actual data collection. First, the schools which were to participate in the study were identified. Schools were chosen on the basis of having a Precollegiate Program in place, and/or on the basis of their willingness to participate in the study.

Thirty-one schools participated in the study, of which 18 were categorized as urban and 13 as rural.

Administrative support for the study was obtained by means of a letter (see Appendix A) to the superintendents of each of the counties selected for the study. This letter was accompanied by a copy

[1] The reference for population figures was: *Profile XV, Profiles of Florida School Districts, 1984-85*, Annual Report of the Commissioner of Education, Division of Public Schools, Florida Department of Education.

of the Academic Information Form (see Appendix C). The letter set forth the nature of the research and the potential benefits to the schools and to their students.

To add to the credibility of the study, a letter of endorsement from Betty Castor, the Commissioner of Education, followed the initial letter to the superintendents (see Appendix D). Follow-up telephone calls were made at periodic intervals to those superintendents who had not responded.

When the consent of the superintendents had been received, the principals of the participating schools were sent a letter (see Appendix E) which explained the study and asked each principal to identify a guidance counselor within the school who would be willing to assist with the data collection for a small stipend. Once the names of the participating guidance counselors had been obtained from the principals, the guidance counselors were mailed a letter of explanation, along with copies of the Parent Consent Form (see Appendices F and G).

A cluster sampling procedure was used. The guidance counselors mailed a list of the twelfth grade English classes from each school participating in the study. The guidance counselors served as the liaison with classroom teachers and helped arrange for the date and time of the survey administration. They also distributed and collected the Parent Consent Forms and kept records of student eligibility for participation based on parental consent.

The survey was administered *only* to those students who had previously obtained parental consent to participate. Parents of the students who participated in the case study interviews were asked to sign an additional Parent Consent Form specific to the interviews (see Appendix H). The students themselves were also asked to sign consent forms (see Appendix I).

Concurrent with these procedures, survey administrators were selected and trained. The survey administrators were either professionals in the field of education (e.g., administrators or teachers) or graduate students. Specific instructions with regard to administration of the survey were provided (see Appendix J). The interviewers for the case studies also attended a training session.

Training sessions were held in four locations across the state. The training was designed to ensure that all survey administrators would present the survey in a consistent manner and, insofar as possible, reduce any bias which might otherwise be introduced through administration of the survey.

The completed questionnaires, along with the information obtained by the guidance counselors from the students' permanent record files, were analyzed using the Statistical Analysis System (SAS). The SAS is a computer program designed for analysis of social science and other data. The chi square test for independence was used to test for differences among: the college bound versus the non college bound versus the college aspirant, rural versus urban, male versus female, and minority versus majority groups.

A list of the survey respondents was generated by region. From this list fifteen students were randomly selected to participate in the case study interviews.

Using an expanded version of the questionnaire, the interviewers met individually with the selected students and conducted the interviews. Data obtained from the interviews reinforced the findings of the study but did not add new information. Therefore, the interview transcripts have not been appended to the study.

Limitations. The findings of this study are subject to the limitations inherent in any survey research which relies on a self-report instrument. Since only those subjects who had been able to obtain parental consent responded, there is a possibility that the results have been influenced by the volunteer factor. That is, volunteers may differ in some way from nonvolunteers.

The use of schools which already had existing Precollegiate Programs may also have influenced student responses. Students in these schools may be more aware of issues related to postsecondary attendance because of their exposure to the Precollegiate Program as compared to students from schools without the Program.

While black student participation in the study was disproportionately high in comparison to their representation in the state's twelfth grade population, this was not considered to be disadvantageous since one goal of the study was to learn more about factors influencing black students to attend college.

The form used by guidance counselors for the purpose of gathering academic data from students' permanent files proved to have ambiguities which may have resulted in variances in the way in which the academic data were recorded. An effort was made to control for this variance through selective

use of only those items which were reported in a consistent manner.

While 811 questionnaires were judged usable, it was discovered that items on many of them had been left blank or were otherwise unusable for data analysis. While it is common to find from 10 to 15 unusable responses per item in a sample as large as 811, there were fifteen items that had between 100 and 200 unusable responses, and nine items with over 200 unusable responses. Care was taken when data based on these items were analyzed and interpreted.

The generalizability of the findings of this study are dependent upon the representativeness of the sample to Florida's twelfth grade student population. To control for this limitation, the survey sample was drawn from each of the five regions of the state in numbers which roughly approximate the population distribution for each region. The twelfth grade classes from participating schools were selected by random selection procedures.

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

Demographic Characteristics of the Sample. A total of 883 twelfth grade students was surveyed. Enrollment data provided by the Florida Department of Education show that 97,077 twelfth grade students were enrolled in Florida's public schools during the 1987-88 school year. Thus, the 883 students approaches a 1.0% sample of the state's twelfth graders. From this sample, 811 usable questionnaires were obtained.

Racial characteristics. An analysis of student demographic data (see Table 1) found that 46.6% of the sample were white, 34.7% were black, 4.1% were Hispanic, 1.1% were Asian, and 4.5% were other; 8.7% chose not to indicate their racial or ethnic origin. The heavy representation of black students is probably attributable to the inclusion of several predominantly black schools in the sample.

Regional distribution. With regard to state-wide distribution, the regional proportions of the sample roughly approximate the population distributions of the scholastic reporting regions. The distribution by region was: Panhandle, 8.3%; Crown, 25.6%; East Central, 20.6%; West Central, 15%; South, 30.5%. Thirty-nine (39.2%) percent of the sample were from rural areas; 60.8% were from urban areas.

Age and sex distribution. With regard to sex, 42.9% of the sample was male; 52.6% was female (with 4.4% of the students not responding to the item on gender). Age distributions were as follows: 0.4% were under 16; 73.7% were between 16-17 years; 19.1% were between 18-19 years; 2.5% were between 20-21 years, and 4% did not respond to the age item.

Table 1.
Age, Ethnic Background, Sex, and Distribution by Region of the Study Sample

Variable		Frequency	Percent
Ethnic Background:	Asian American	9	1.1
	Black American	282	34.7
	Hispanic American	34	4.1
	White American	378	46.6
	Other	37	4.5
	No Response	71	8.7
	Total	811	99.7
Distribution by Region:	Crown	208	25.6
	West Central	122	15.0
	East Central	167	20.6
	Panhandle	67	8.3
	South	247	30.5
	Total	811	100.0
Area:	Urban	492	60.8
	Rural	317	39.2
	Unreported	2	
	Total	811	100.0
Age:	Under 16	2	0.4
	16-17	598	73.7
	18-19	155	19.1
	20-21	21	2.5
	Over 21	2	0.2
	No Response	33	4.0
	Total	811	99.9
Sex:	Male	348	42.9
	Female	427	52.6
	No Response	36	4.4
	Total	811	99.9

RESULTS BY RESEARCH QUESTION

RESEARCH QUESTION 1: IS THERE A RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN VARIABLES SUCH AS PARENTAL EXPECTATIONS, PEER INFLUENCE, PARENTS' EDUCATION, PARENTS' OCCUPATION, AND ASPIRATION TO ATTEND COLLEGE? AND DECISION TO APPLY FOR COLLEGE?

Aspiration versus decision to attend college. The twelfth graders in this survey were asked to state their plans after graduation. A large majority (75.6%) said that they wanted to continue their education (see Table 2). According to existing data, this figure is too high to be considered accurate for participation in postsecondary education. A positive response to this item should be interpreted not as a decision to attend college but as an aspiration. Data from the Center for Education-Statistics

(1988) shows that the college participation rate for high school graduates nationally and in Florida was about 34% in 1986. When survey respondents were asked if they had applied for admission to a college, 31.9% said that they had. Therefore, in this study sample, the best estimate of how many twelfth graders will be college bound appears to be whether they reported having applied for admission to college at the time of the survey.

Parental expectations. The conceptual framework of this study assumes that parental expectations are related to college aspirations. This assumption is supported as parental expectations were significantly related to student aspirations ($p < .001$). Over ninety-seven (97.4%) percent of students who applied for admission to college stated that their parents expected them to go. Ninety-six (96.4%) percent of the students who said they wanted to go but had not applied also stated that their parents expected them to go. Only 43.9% of the students who said they would not continue their education immediately after graduation said that their parents expected them to be college bound.

Table 2.
Percent of Twelfth Graders Who Do Not Intend to Go to College, Who Aspire But Did Not Apply, and Those Who Applied to a College, by Parents' Expectations, Peers' Influence, Parents' Education Level, and Parents' Occupation Level

		Not going to college	Aspire but didn't apply	Applied to a college	p
Self-Reported by Sample		26.1	42.0	31.9	–
Parents' Expectations	Go to college	43.9	96.4	97.4	< .001
	Not go	56.1	3.6	2.6	
Peers' Influence	Go to college	41.3	90.2	96.9	< .001
	Not go	58.7	9.8	5.6	
Father's Education Level	Went to college	27.8	36.1	42.1	< .01
	High/Trade School	72.1	63.9	57.9	
Mother's Education Level	Went to college	26.9	36.9	43.3	< .003
	High/Trade School	73.1	63.1	56.7	
Father's Occupation Level	Professional/Managerial	37.8	52.5	60.7	< .001
	Sales/Unskilled	62.2	46.5	39.4	
Mother's Occupation Level	Professional/Managerial	23.2	17.6	19.4	Not Significant
	Sales/Unskilled	76.8	82.4	80.6	

Peer expectations. Results for peer influences are similar to parental influences regarding aspirations to attend college. Respondents to the survey reported that their friends also exerted influence on them to attend college. The relationship was significant ($p < .001$). Of those who had applied for admission, 96.9% said that their peers influenced them to want to go to college. Of those who said they wanted to go but had not applied, 90.2% said that their peers had influenced them, and only 41.3% of the students who said that they did not plan to go on to college reported that their peers tried to influence them to go on to postsecondary education.

Parents' education level. As can be seen in Table 2, both the father's level of education and mother's level of education are significantly related to college related aspirations and behavior. Even though less than half of the parents of students in this sample went to college, there is a relationship between the parents' participation in postsecondary education and the survey participants' aspirations or decisions to apply for college. Over forty percent of the students who said that they had applied also reported that their parents had gone to college. The figure drops into the mid-thirty percent range for those aspire but had not yet applied to a college. Less than 30 percent of the students who said they

were not going on after graduation had parents who had gone to college. These results were significant at the .01 level or less.

Parents' occupation level. The father's occupation level was significantly related to aspiration and the decision to apply for college (see Table 2). The differences regarding father's occupation level are greater than those related to education level. For example, 60.7 percent of the students who had applied for college reported that their father was either in a profession or in a managerial position. This figure was 52.5% for fathers of students who aspire to continue their education. It drops to 37.8% for students who said that they do not plan to go to college after high school graduation. The differences were significant at less than the .001 level.

This pattern of results did not hold for the mother's occupation level, however; the results were not significant. It is also noteworthy that fewer mothers were in professional or managerial positions. The vast majority of them were reported as being either in sales or in unskilled jobs.

Based on the results presented in Table 2, it was concluded that parents' expectations, peer influences, and parents' education levels, but only the fathers' occupation level, are significantly related to twelfth graders' aspirations to attend or to apply for college.

RESEARCH QUESTION 2: IS THERE A RELATIONSHIP AMONG VARIABLES SUCH AS CAREER ASPIRATIONS, CAREER GOALS, AND ASPIRATION TO ATTEND COLLEGE? AND DECISION TO APPLY FOR COLLEGE?

Educational Goals and aspirations. Whether twelfth graders in this sample intend to go to college or not, the vast majority of them (90% or more) believe that college is necessary for success (see

Table 3.
Percent of Twelfth Graders Who Do Not Intend to Go to College, Who Aspire but Did Not Apply, and Those Who Applied to a College, by Educational Aspirations, and Career Goals

Variable		Not going to college	Aspire but didn't apply	Applied to a college	p
College Necessary for Success	Necessary	90.1	99.4	97.7	< .001
	Unnecessary	9.9	0.6	2.3	
Want to Continue Education Because	Need for job	50.3	83.5	80.3	< .001
	Parents want it	5.4	2.1	1.6	
	Be with friends	2.7	1.4	1.6	
	Other	15.1	11.9	15.4	
	Not Applicable	26.5	1.1	1.1	
Educational Goal	A.A. Degree	18.4	14.0	8.4	< .001
	B.A. Degree	16.8	49.2	41.1	
	Graduate Degree	10.5	30.2	47.5	
	Other & N.A.	54.2	6.6	3.0	
Want a Good Job in Five Years	Agree	98.5	95.8	95.8	Not Significant
	Disagree	1.5	4.2	4.9	
Kind of Job in Five Years	Professional/Managerial	59.5	79.5	83.4	< .001
	Labor/Sales	16.3	6.4	2.9	
	Other	24.2	14.1	13.6	
Income Goal in Five Years	< $10,000/year	2.2	1.0	3.4	< .001
	$10 to $20,000	23.8	20.3	7.3	
	$20 to $30,000	42.3	40.9	37.1	
	$30 to $40,000	16.9	19.6	30.2	
	> $40,000/year	15.3	18.2	22.0	

Table 3.). At a personal level, these students say that they want to continue their education because college is needed for a job. And the degree of perceived necessity is related to college-going plans after graduation. For example, those who aspire to go to college or have applied (83.5% and 80.3% respectively) say they want to continue their education because it is needed for a good job. Even those who said that they will not be going on to college (50.3%) responded that a college education is needed for a job. These differences were significant at less than the .001 level.

Educational goals. Given the instrumental value of a college education, it was not surprising to find that college aspirations are also related to educational goals. For example, 88.6% of those who had applied for college said that they wish to earn either a baccalaureate or a graduate degree. A large proportion (79.4%) of those who aspire but have not yet applied wish to earn either an undergraduate or graduate degree. Those who said that they do not plan to go to college immediately after graduation still see themselves pursuing a degree at some time in the future: 18.4% would like an A.A. degree, 16.8% a baccalaureate degree, and 10.5% a graduate degree. This relationship was significant at less than the .001 level.

Career goals. Almost all respondents (over 95%) said they wanted to have a good job in five years (see Table 3). However, they differed on the kind of job and their income goal. Here again, aspiration to go to college and decision to apply were highly related; the vast majority of those who applied for college (83.4%) said that they want to be in either a profession or in a managerial position. The figure for those who aspired but had not yet applied was 79.5%. The figure drops to 59.5% for those who are not going to college after graduation. A similar relationship emerges regarding personal income goals in five years, with the vast majority (89.3%) of college applicants desiring to earn over $20,000 per year. Those who aspire but have not applied for college have a sizable proportion (20.3%) reporting that they want to earn an income between $10,000 and $20,000 per year. Those who do not plan to go to college have proportionally more respondents toward the lower end of the income distribution.

The results presented in Table 3 portray educational and career aspirations that are closely related: if one wants to have a good job, and earn an above average salary, then one needs to go to college because a college degree is perceived to be an important prerequisite for success.

RESEARCH QUESTION 3: IS THERE A RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ACADEMIC VARIABLES SUCH AS COURSE OF STUDY, FEELINGS ABOUT HIGH SCHOOL, FEELINGS ABOUT BEING PREPARED FOR COLLEGE, AND ASPIRATION TO GO TO COLLEGE? AND DECISION TO APPLY FOR COLLEGE?

Even though high school students may be surrounded with parental and peer expectations that communicate the importance of going to college, prior academic experiences can mediate the influence of these expectations. Thus, we would expect to find that those who are successful in school are also likely to want to go on to college. Conversely, those who have done poorly in school are less likely to want to go on to postsecondary education. Data presented in Table 4 test these assumptions.

Course of study. A majority of those who applied for college (68.5%) reported that they were enrolled in the academic track; 17.3% said they were in a general academic program, and 12.7% were in a vocational track. The figures decline for those who aspire but have not applied for college: 47.8% are in the academic, 29.1% in the general, and 20.4% are in the vocational track. This stair-step pattern declines even further for those not going to college: 18.0% academic, 46.0% general, and 32.3% vocational. These relationships were significant at less than the .001 level.

Table 4.
Percent of Twelfth Graders Who Do Not Intend to Go to College, Who Aspire but Did Not Apply, and Those Who Applied to a College, by Self-Reported Perceptions of Readiness for College

Variable		Not going to college	Aspire but didn't apply	Applied to a college	p
Course of Study	Academic	18.0	47.8	68.5	< .001
	General	46.0	29.1	17.3	
	Vocational	32.3	20.4	12.7	
	Other	3.7	2.7	1.5	
Feeling Prepared for College	Prepared	46.6	67.8	77.1	< .001
	Unprepared	53.4	32.2	22.9	
High School Prepared Study Skills	Prepared	92.2	88.1	92.5	Not Significant
	Unprepared	7.8	11.9	7.5	
High School Prepared Test-taking Skills	Prepared	96.9	90.7	94.4	< .05
	Unprepared	3.1	9.3	5.6	
Perception of Academic Work	Easy	58.4	51.8	48.1	Not Significant
	Difficult	41.6	48.2	51.9	
High School Grades Reflected Performance Appropriately	Appropriately	75.1	77.7	73.7	Not Significant
	Inappropriately	24.9	22.3	26.3	
High School Courses Prepared me for a Job	Prepared	88.1	87.0	86.8	Not Significant
	Unprepared	11.9	13.0	13.2	

Perceptions of high school academic experience. Respondents were asked whether they felt prepared for college work. The responses to this question were more in line with what one might expect when comparing college-bound youth with the non-college-bound. Seventy-seven (77.1%) of the college applicants felt that they were prepared for college level work; 67.8% of the college aspirants reported feeling prepared, and only 46.6% of those not going felt prepared ($p < .001$).

The participants were asked to rate whether their high school courses helped them develop study skills and test taking skills. The results regarding study skills were not statistically significant, while results for test taking skills were significant at less than the .05 level. The relationship in the latter case is interesting if not unexpected. Almost ninety-seven (96.9%) percent of those not going on to college reported that their high school courses had prepared them to take tests. The lowest group, surprisingly, was the aspiring group with 90.7% feeling prepared. College applicants were intermediate with 94.4% feeling prepared ($p < .05$).

Differences between groups on three other items were not statistically significant. The content of these items addressed the perceived difficulty of academic work in high school, whether high school grades appropriately reflected the individual's academic performance, and whether high school courses had prepared them for a job (see Table 4).

RESEARCH QUESTION 4: IS THERE A RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN VARIABLES RELATED TO FAMILY CIRCUMSTANCES AND ASPIRATION TO GO TO COLLEGE? AND DECISION TO APPLY FOR COLLEGE?

Often, whether a student can go to college depends on his or her family's circumstances. For example, we would hypothesize that students from intact families would be more likely to go on to college than students from single parent families. We would expect that the number of children dependent on the breadwinner(s) in a family would have an effect on college-going possibilities. Total family income might also be related to college-going aspirations. However, data collected to address these relationships provide little support for our theoretical expectations — save for family income.

Table 5.
Percent of Twelfth Graders Who Do Not Intend to Go to College, Who Aspire but Did Not Apply, and Those Who Applied to a College, by Variables Related to Family Circumstances

Variable		Not going to college	Aspire but didn't apply	Applied to a college	p
Number of Parents in the Home	Both Parents	44.2	50.6	53.3	Not Significant
	Other Arrangement	55.8	49.4	48.7	
Number of Brothers & Sisters at Home	One or less	63.1	60.5	62.3	Not Significant
	Two or more	36.9	39.5	37.7	
Number Dependent on Breadwinner(s)	Two to three	24.1	16.9	15.4	Not Significant
	Four to five	66.5	73.1	75.7	
	Six or more	9.4	10.1	27.9	
Total Family Income	< $20,000/year	48.4	39.1	29.8	= .001
	> $20,000/year	51.6	60.9	70.2	

Data on the number of parents living in the home displayed the expected trend but failed to reach statistical significance (see Table 5). Nonetheless, the trend was as expected: fewer students (44.2%) not going on to college reported having two parents in the home; 50.6% of college aspirants reported two parents; and 53.3% of those who applied for college said that they had two parents at home.

Results on the number of brothers and sisters at home and the number of persons dependent on family breadwinner(s) failed to reach statistical significance, also. A strong relationship between family income and college aspirations was observed, however.

As can be seen in Table 5, 70.2% of those who applied for college said that their family income was greater than $20,000 per year. Almost 61% of those who want to go but had not applied reported family income of over $20,000 per year. And 51.6% of those not going on to college said their family income was over $20,000 per year. This result was significant at the .001 level.

RESEARCH QUESTION 5: IS THERE A RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EXPERIENCES IN SCHOOL, EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES, AND ASPIRATION TO GO TO COLLEGE? AND DECISION TO APPLY FOR COLLEGE?

Data presented in Table 6 support the idea that in-school experiences and extracurricular participation are related to educational aspirations. For example, 90.6% of the twelfth graders who applied for college reported liking their elementary school teachers. This figure dropped slightly to 88.9% for those who aspire but did not apply. It dropped even farther (to 82.7%) for those who say they are not going to college ($p < .05$). A similar pattern was observed in terms of liking for one's

high school teachers, but this result was not statistically significant.

Differences were observed between groups in terms of academic enrichment and extracurricular activities — both outside of school. These differences were small in the case of academic enrichment

Table 6.
Percent of Twelfth Graders Who Do Not Intend to Go to College, Who Aspire but Did Not Apply, and Those who Applied to a College, by Perceptions of School and Extracurricular Participation

Variable		Not going to college	Aspire but didn't apply	Applied to a college	p
Liking for High School Teachers	Like them	82.4	86.7	89.4	Not Significant
	Disliked them	17.6	13.3	10.6	
Liking for Elementary Teachers	Like them	82.7	88.9	90.6	< .05
	Disliked them	17.3	11.1	9.4	
Academic Enrichment Out of School	McKnight/Berg	2.0	1.3	1.9	< .05
	College Reach Out	0.5	5.3	5.3	
	Other	14.2	14.0	17.5	
	Not applicable	83.2	79.3	75.2	
Activities Outside of School	Music lessons	4.4	5.7	9.8	= .008
	Sports	22.2	25.1	25.0	
	Church	25.0	28.5	37.2	
	Other	16.7	14.8	19.9	
	Not applicable	31.7	25.9	12.2	
Consider Teaching as Career Because of	Salary	3.8	2.4	1.5	Not Significant
	Respect	3.9	2.0	1.0	
	Work schedule	7.6	8.8	5.9	
	Other	18.6	12.5	17.8	
	Not applicable	66.1	74.2	73.8	
Would not Choose Teaching Because	Wouldn't enjoy it	41.3	43.0	39.2	= .05
	Salary too low	17.5	26.1	30.6	
	Not good at it	11.1	6.0	5.0	
	Other	14.3	10.9	10.1	
	Not applicable	15.9	14.1	15.1	

activities and they favored those who had applied for college. The relationship between aspirations and extracurricular activities was stronger and was significant at the .008 level. Those who had applied more frequently reported taking private music lessons, participating in sports outside of school, and being active in a church.

Two items asked students about their interest in teaching as a career. The first item asked students to give reasons why they would pursue a career in teaching. Although the results failed to reach statistical significance, the pattern in the data suggested that those going on to college were less interested in teaching than those who were not. The second item asked respondents to state why they would not choose teaching. The most frequently endorsed responses were that they wouldn't enjoy teaching and the salary was too low. A lesser number said they didn't want to teach because they would not be good at it. The differences were significant at the .05 level.

RESEARCH QUESTION 6: IS THERE A RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ACCESS TO GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING AND ASPIRATION TO GO TO COLLEGE? AND DECISION TO APPLY FOR COLLEGE?

For better or worse, gaining information on going to college places most of the responsibility on students. While there are many people and sources available with information about colleges, they must be accessed by students.

Table 7.
Percent of Twelfth Graders Who Do Not Intend to Go to College, Who Aspire but Did Not Apply, and Those Who Applied to a College, by Variables Related to Counseling and Information Seeking

Variable		Not Going to college	Aspire but didn't apply	Applied to a college	p
Knew Counselor's Name	Yes	95.3	95.2	98.1	Not Significant
	No	4.7	4.8	1.9	
Number of Meetings With Counselor	Zero to one	14.1	11.6	5.2	= .009
	Two or more	85.9	88.4	94.8	
Topics Discussed With Counselor	Career Plans	78.0	37.8	23.1	< .001
	College Plans	22.0	62.2	76.9	
Major Source of Information on College Admissions	Counselors	24.8	15.7	14.0	= .004
	Brochures	39.4	48.8	60.1	
	Teachers	7.9	4.0	2.1	
	Friends	13.3	18.1	11.2	
	Others	14.6	13.3	12.6	
Amount of Financial Aid Information	Informed	83.1	81.5	86.8	Not Significant
	Not Informed	16.9	18.5	13.2	
Major Source of Information on Financial Aid	Counselors	29.1	22.3	30.4	= .002
	Brochures	32.0	39.8	48.5	
	Teachers	9.3	6.8	2.9	
	Friends	8.1	12.5	4.7	
	Others	21.5	18.6	13.4	
Able to Find Financial Resources	Agree	76.2	85.5	88.7	= .005
	Disagree	23.8	14.5	11.3	
Made Career Decision	Yes	75.9	67.5	80.0	= .005
	No	24.1	32.5	20.0	
Assistance Obtained in School from	Teacher	33.7	36.9	37.4	Not Significant
	Counselor	33.7	31.7	32.7	
	Principal	2.4	1.1	4.0	
	Asst. Principal	6.5	2.6	5.2	
	Other	23.7	27.6	20.7	
Assistance Outside of School from	Family	60.0	55.0	47.7	Not Significant
	Non-family	40.0	45.0	52.3	

Interaction with guidance counselors. As can be seen in Table 7, the vast majority of high school seniors (over 95%) in the sample say they know their counselor's name. The number of meetings with the counselor appears to be related to students' aspirations to attend college. Almost 95% of the students who applied for college say that they had met with their counselor two or more times. The proportion drops to 88.4% for students who aspire for college but have not applied. Only 85.9% of those who say that they do not plan to go to college had met with their counselor two or more times. This relationship was significant at the .009 level.

The relationship between going to college and discussion topics is even stronger. For example, 76.9% of those who have applied for college say that they had discussed college plans with their counselor while only a meager 22% of those who do not plan to go on to college reported discussions about college plans. Those who aspire to go but have not applied (62.2%) fell between the two extremes. This relationshp was significant at less than the .001 level.

Sources of information about college. We would expect counselors and teachers to be a major source of such information. Instead, what we found was that brochures were the major source — especially for those who had applied for college (60.1%). Slightly over 48% of the aspirants and 39% of those not going to college said that brochures were their major source of information ($p = .004$). Counselors are seen as the next most frequently used source of information, followed by friends. Teachers were reported as the least frequently used source regarding information about college admissions.

Information about financial aid. Assuming that a student can qualify for admission, the next major hurdle is financing a college education. A large majority of the sample's twelfth graders are optimistic about finding the necessary resources. As can be seen in Table 7, 88.7% of those who have applied state that they will be able to find the necessary financial resources. They are followed closely by college aspirants, 85.5% of whom say they will find a way. Those who have decided not to go on are less optimistic with 76.2% saying they would be able to find a way.

Finding a way to finance a postsecondary education requires information. Here, counselors are used almost as frequently as brochures. Again, teachers are the least frequently mentioned source of information about financial aid. The differences observed here were significant at the .002 level.

Obtaining assistance. Obtaining assistance to address personal problems can come from a variety of sources — both in and outside of school. In school, teachers and counselors are seen as sources of assistance in approximately equal proportions of about 33% each. Principals and assistant principals are reported to be sources of assistance infrequently. However, none of the differences observed here were statistically significant.

Family members are seen as the most frequent source of assistance outside of school — especially among those who have decided not to go to college. On the other hand, only 47.7% of those who have applied for college report relying on family members. While these results present an interesting trend, the observed differences were not statistically significant.

Making a career decision. The senior year of high school begins the transition from adolescent dependence to adult independence. Life determining decision points begin to appear on a regular basis. One of the most fundamental life decisions is that of choosing a career.

As can be seen in Table 7, those who have applied for college and those who say they are not going report having made a career decision, 80.0% and 75.9% respectively. Only 67.5% of those who aspire for college but have not applied report having made a career decision. The fact that they aspire to go but have not applied suggests a degree of ambivalence or uncertainty that is not as prevalent in the other two groups. This difference was significant at the .005 level.

RESEARCH QUESTION 7: IS THERE A RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MINORITY VERSUS MAJORITY GROUP MEMBERSHIP AND SELECTED, FAMILY, ACADEMIC, CAREER AND FINANCIAL VARIABLES?

One of the purposes of the survey was to compare minority and majority students on variables related to college participation. Data presented in Table 8 highlight results involving minority and majority differences.

Parents' expectations. Data presented in Table 2 show that parental expectations greatly influence aspirations to attend college for students in general. While the same relationship holds for minority students, minority parents' expectations are lower than those of majority parents. As can be seen in Table 8, 88.2% of the majority students perceive that their parents expect them to go to college while only 82.7% of the minority students perceive this expectation. However, this difference is not statistically significant.

Forty-two percent of majority fathers were reported to have attended college, whereas only 25.7% of minority fathers did so. The same pattern is seen for fathers' occupation level which has been consistently found to be related to aspirations and college attendance in other studies. As shown in Table 8, larger proportions of majority fathers worked in managerial and professional occupational levels than did minority fathers. This relationship was significant at less than the .001 level.

Table 8.
Percent of Twelfth Grade Minority and Majority Students, by Grade Point Average (GPA) and Selected Academic and Financial Variables

Variable		Minority Students	Majority Students	p
Parents' Expectations	Go to college	82.7	88.2	Not Significant
	Not go	17.3	11.8	
Father's Education Level	Went to college	25.7	42.0	< .001
	High/Trade School	74.3	58.0	
Father's Occupation Level	Managerial	28.1	35.1	< .001
	Professional	11.1	24.7	
	Sales	2.8	8.1	
	Labor	58.1	32.1	
Plans After High School Graduation	Continue education	72.5	78.7	< .001
	Get married	0.0	1.6	
	Get a job	8.1	11.0	
	Join military	16.1	4.5	
	Other	3.3	4.3	
Setting to Continue Education	College/University	19.9	15.6	< .001
	Vocational/Technical School	7.9	5.2	
	Military	15.5	5.5	
	Other	.06	1.6	
	Not applicable	56.2	72.5	
Applied to a College	Yes	30.1	32.7	Not Significant
	No	69.9	67.3	
Course of Study in High School	Academic	39.6	46.7	Not Significant
	General	31.4	30.3	
	Vocational	25.4	21.4	
	Other	3.6	1.7	
Feelings About Preparation for College	Prepared	69.4	61.1	= .02
	Unprepared	30.6	38.9	
Grade Point Average		1.79	2.54	= .001
Will Find Adequate Financial Resources	Agree	87.6	80.6	= .01
	Disagree	12.4	19.4	

(Table 8 continued on next page)

(Table 8 continued from previous page)

Variable		Minority Students	Majority Students	p
Further Education Will Be Financed By	Savings	16.7	24.4	
	Scholarship/Loans	35.7	22.2	
	Work/Study	13.3	11.9	=.002
	Don't Know	21.4	27.3	
	Not applicable	12.9	14.2	
Will Not Continue Education Because of	Finances	15.7	5.7	
	Far from home	3.3	1.7	
	Academically unprepared	12.4	7.5	<.001
	Other	14.5	8.7	
	Not applicable	54.1	76.4	
Number of parents in the Home	Both parents	42.7	55.0	<.001
	Other arrangement	57.3	45.0	
Number of Brothers & Sisters at Home	One or less	49.9	73.9	<.001
	Two or more	50.1	26.1	
Personal Responsibilities After School	Part-time job	53.1	65.2	
	Sibling care	7.4	1.6	
	Relative care	1.6	0.4	<.001
	Housework	29.0	17.6	
	Other	9.0	15.2	
Total Family Income	<$20,000/year	54.3	22.9	<.001
	>$20,000/year	45.7	77.1	
Topics Discussed with Counselor	Career plans	54.1	42.0	=.02
	College plans	45.9	58.0	
Made Career Plans	Yes	78.8	67.2	<.001
	No	21.2	32.8	
Awareness of Advanced Placement Courses	Aware	52.4	74.3	=.001
	Unaware	37.6	25.7	
Seek Help in School From	Teachers	32.8	37.5	
	Counselor	40.3	28.4	
	Principal	3.8	1.5	<.001
	Assistant Principal	5.5	2.7	
	Other	17.8	29.9	

Educational plans after high school. The twelfth graders in the survey sample were asked about their plans after high school. Based on recent trends, we would expect fewer minorities to continue their education beyond high school. This trend was observed in the survey sample. Over seventy-eight percent (78.7%) of the majority respondents said they were going to continue their education as compared to 72.5% of the minority respondents (see Table 8). Of special interest is the number who said they were going to join the military: 16.1% minority versus 4.5% majority. These differences were significant at less than the .001 level.

While over 70% of the survey sample indicated a desire to continue their education after high school, data from previous years suggest that only about half of those who aspire will actually enroll. Fortunately, the survey data were collected in a way that allowed them to be analyzed more precisely.

espondents were asked if they had applied to a college or university. The results for this item showed that 30.1% minority and 32.7% majority students said that they had submitted an application. This difference is small and failed to reach statistical significance. In addition, these reported application rates approximate the college participation rate of 34% noted in Florida in 1986.

Academic comparisons. Students' grades were retrieved from their permanent records. An analysis of the survey sample's grades showed that minority students had compiled an average GPA of 1.79 whereas majority students had an average GPA of 2.54. This difference was significant at the .001 level. This difference in achievement is substantial, representing a difference of almost three-fourths of a letter grade. A difference this large has implications regarding plans for going to college.

Feelings about preparation. Given the difference in academic performance, how do students view themselves regarding preparation for college? As can be seen in Table 8, 69.4% of minority students report feeling prepared for college while only 61.1% of majority students feel prepared. This difference was significant at the .02 level. The differences in GPA and feelings about preparation for college appear to be contradictory. It may well be that a self-report instrument such as the survey questionnaire permits respondents to "put their best foot forward," whereas accumulated GPA does not. A GPA is the result of several different "evaluators" using several "samples" of achievement. Grades, to be sure, contain a subjective element on the part of the grader. Nonetheless, the GPA is based on judgments by many different evaluators using many different achievement tasks. Thus, GPA is probably a more reliable and valid index of a student's preparation for college.

The kinds of grades students earn could be related to the kinds of courses they take. Typically, students can be classified by the pattern of courses which they have chosen to elect. Respondents to the survey were asked to identify the course of study which they had followed in high school. Differences in programs of study were small and not statistically significant. As can be seen in Table 8, an academic course of study was the one most frequently elected by majority students — the proportion being 46.7%. Minorities also reported electing the academic program but to a lesser degree (39.6%). The two groups were virtually identical regarding the proportion electing a general course (31.4 minority versus 30.3 majority). The two groups were also quite similar regarding choice of the vocational track (25.4 minority versus 21.4 majority).

Financing a higher education. While physical access to a postsecondary institution in Florida is relatively easy, paying for the costs of a college education is the major challenge for many. Students in the survey sample appear to be optimistic as 87.6% of the minority students and 80.6% of the majority respondents state that they will be able to find adequate financial resources ($p < .01$). A follow-up question asked them how their postsecondary education would be financed. Group differences were found as follows. More majority students (24.4% versus 16.7%) said that they would rely on savings to finance their higher education. By way of contrast, more minority students (35.7% versus 22.2%) said that they would finance their postsecondary education with scholarships and loans. The two groups were almost identical regarding Work/Study support (13.3% minority versus 11.9% majority). Of special interest is the proportion who said they didn't know how they would finance going on to college (21.4% minority versus 27.3% majority). So from one-fourth to one-fifth of those who aspire to go to college are unclear as to how it will be financed. These differences were significant at the .002 level.

A larger proportion of minority students (15.7% versus 5.7% majority) report that lack of finances would prohibit their progress to postsecondary education. Lack of academic preparation was another reason given. Twelve (12.4%) percent of the minority students and 7.5% of the majority students cited lack of academic preparation as their reason for not progressing to college.

Family circumstances. Data collected from this sample of high school seniors revealed differences in family circumstances (see Table 8). For example, 55.0% of the majority students and only 42.7% of the minority students reported having both parents at home. There was a difference in family size also as 73.9% of the majority students and only 49.9% of the minority students reported having one or less brothers and sisters at home. These differences were significant at less than the .001 level.

The students differed in personal responsibilities outside of school. For example, 65.2% of the majority students said they had a part-time job compared to only 53.1% for the minority students.

On the other hand, 29.0% of the minority students said that they helped with housework as compared to 17.6% of the majority students. A larger proportion of the minority students said that they were responsible for caring for either a sibling or an older relative. These differences were significant at less than the .001 level. And finally, the groups differed in total family income with 77.1% of the majority students reporting an annual family income of over $20,000 per year compared to 45.7% of the minority students.

Guidance and counseling. There are differences in uses made of guidance and counseling depending on group membership. For example, 58% of the majority students reported discussing college plans with their counselor while only 45.9% of the minority students reported the same thing. The reverse was true for career plans as 54.1% of the minority students said that they had discussed career plans with their counselor as opposed to 42.0% of the majority students. These differences were significant at the .02 level.

One other difference which is noteworthy is that 78.8% of the minority respondents stated that they had made career plans as compared to 67.2% of the majority respondents. This is a relatively large difference which was significant at less than the .001 level. How realistic these career decisions may be is a matter for conjecture — especially if going on to college is a requirement to achieve a career goal.

Many high schools now offer advanced placement courses for students who want to earn college credit in order to better prepare themselves for college. But participating in advanced placement courses requires being aware that such courses are available. Group differences were observed here also in that 74.3% of the majority students said they were aware of advanced placement courses while only 52.4% of the minority students said that they were aware.

From whom do students say they seek help in school? Group differences were observed here, also. Minority students tended to report seeking help from the counselor (40.3% versus 28.4%), while majority students reported seeking help from teachers (37.5% versus 32.8%). The principal and assistant principal were cited least frequently as persons to turn to for help.

RESEARCH QUESTION 8: IS THERE A RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RESIDING IN AN URBAN VERSUS RURAL ENVIRONMENT AND SELECTED ACADEMIC AND EDUCATIONAL VARIABLES?

Previous studies have found that the environmental area in which students live is frequently associated with educational aspirations and academic achievement. Results presented below test for possible relationships between selected academic and educational variables and kind of environment in which students live.

Parents' and peers' expectations. As would be expected on the basis of previous research, parents in urban areas have higher educational aspirations than those living in rural areas. As can be seen in Table 9, 87.6% of urban parents expect their sons or daughters to go on to college compared to 81.7% of rural parents. This difference is relatively small but statistically significant at the .05 level.

Peers appear to reflect parental values regarding going on to college as 84.1% of urban students were reported as urging their peers to go to college as compared to 73.9% of their rural counterparts. This difference was significant at the .001 level.

It is interesting to note that parents' occupation levels are also related to community environment. A larger proportion of urban fathers (37.9%) went to college as compared to rural fathers (29.9%).

Educational goals and academic preparation. The trends noted above also appear to apply to the course of study elected in high school. For example, 45.4% of urban students elected an academic program compared to 40.8% of the rural students. Not surprisingly, higher percentages of rural students selected the general or the vocational tracks. It should be noted, however, that these differences failed to reach statistical significance.

Table 9.
Percent of Twelfth Grade Urban and Rural Students, by Selected Educational and Academic Variables

Variable		Urban	Rural	p
Parents' Expectations	Go to college	87.6	81.7	< .05
	Not go	12.4	18.3	
Peers' Influence	Go to college	84.1	73.9	= .001
	Not go	15.9	26.1	
Father's Education Level	Went to college	37.9	29.9	< .001
	High/Trade School	62.1	70.1	
Course of Study in High School	Academic	45.4	40.8	Not Significant
	General	30.1	32.8	
	Vocational	21.4	24.4	
	Other	3.1	2.0	
Educational Goals	A.A. degree	12.4	20.4	< .05
	B.A. degree	37.8	34.5	
	Graduate degree	30.3	25.8	
	Other	6.4	5.4	
	Not applicable	13.0	14.0	
Topic Discussed with Counselor	Career Plans	43.4	55.5	= .01
	College Plans	55.6	44.5	
Feelings About Preparation for College	Prepared	65.3	64.8	Not Significant
	Unprepared	34.7	35.2	
Activities Outside of School	Music lessons	7.4	2.3	= .007
	Sports	24.0	22.7	
	Church	25.7	36.3	
	Other	16.9	16.0	
	Not applicable	26.0	22.7	

These groups also differ in their educational goals. The urban students reported having higher educational goals. For example, only 12.4% of urban students (compared to 20.4% rural students) report having the A.A. degree as their educational goal. The proportions are reversed for higher degrees as 37.8% of the urban students (compared to 34.5% of the rural students) say they aspire to achieve a baccalaureate degree, and 30.3% of the urban students (compared to 25.8% of the rural students) seek a graduate degree. These differences were significant at less than the .05 level.

Emphasis on going to college was also reported in terms of topics discussed with guidance counselors. A larger percentage of urban students (55.6%) reported discussing college plans with the guidance counselor as compared to only 44.5% of the rural students. This is a relatively large difference which was significant at the .01 level.

Activities outside of school. Extracurricular patterns differ as a function of the kind of community. A larger proportion of the urban students take private music lessons (7.4% versus 2.3%). They are about even in pursuing out-of-school sports (24.0% urban versus 22.7% rural). The largest difference is found in church participation (25.7% urban versus 36.3% rural). The latter finding is especially interesting in that over one-third of the rural sample would be accessible to activities for communicating information about going to college through youth group activities in local churches.

RESEARCH QUESTION 9: IS THERE A RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN GENDER AND SELECTED EDUCATIONAL AND ACADEMIC VARIABLES?

Differences between the sexes are frequently found. These differences are now more salient because of concerns for equality of opportunity regardless of sex, racial, or ethnic origin. Results presented in Table 10 highlight differences that might be related to sex. Several differences were found; some of them were in nontraditional directions.

Table 10.
Percent of Twelfth Grade Male and Female Students, by Selected Educational and Academic Variables

Variable		Male	Female	p
Parents' Expectations	Go to college	80.3	90.5	< .001
	Not go	19.7	9.5	
Peers' Influence	Go to college	73.0	86.0	< .001
	No go	27.0	14.0	
Plans After High School Graduation	Continue education	71.7	80.2	< .001
	Get married	0.0	1.4	
	Get a job	8.1	9.4	
	Join the military	16.5	5.4	
	Other	3.8	3.5	
Educational Goal	A.A. Degree	11.2	18.4	= .006
	B.A. Degree	38.5	36.1	
	Graduate Degree	30.3	27.3	
	Other	4.2	7.6	
	Not applicable	15.8	10.6	
Kind of Job in Five Years	Professional/Management	65.4	81.6	< .001
	Labor/Sales	13.5	4.5	
	Other	21.1	13.9	
Applied to a College	Yes	31.0	32.9	Not Significant
	No	69.0	67.1	
Made Career Decision	Yes	69.6	76.5	< .05
	No	30.4	23.5	
Further Education Will Be Financed By	Savings	19.5	21.6	= .03
	Scholarships/Loans	34.3	25.2	
	Work/Study	10.4	13.8	
	Don't know	20.5	27.5	
	Not applicable	15.2	12.0	
Activities Outside of School	Music lessons	4.1	6.4	< .001
	Sports	36.8	12.6	
	Church	25.4	34.2	
	Other	12.7	19.8	
	Not applicable	20.9	26.9	

Parents' and peers' expectations. It was interesting to note that a higher proportion of female than male students perceive that their parents want them to go to college (90.5% and 80.3%, respectively). This was also the case regarding peer influences with 86.0% of the female students being urged by their peers to go to college as compared to 73.0% of the males. These differences were both significant at less than the .001 level.

Educational plans and career goals. After graduation from high school, 80.2% of the females said they plan to continue their education as compared to 71.7% of the males. A meager 1.4% of the females said that they planned to get married, whereas none of the boys saw that as an immediate course of action. The groups were about the same regarding getting a job (8.1% males versus 9.4% females). The largest difference was in joining the military with 16.5% of the males and only 5.4% of the females saying that this is what they planned to do. These differences were significant at less than the .001 level.

Differences in applying for college were small and not significant. The proportions were similar with 31.0% of the males and 32.9% of the females reporting that they had applied to a college.

Males tended to hold higher aspirations for college degrees, however. As can be seen in Table 10, higher proportions of males wanted to achieve baccalaureate and graduate degrees than females. A larger proportion of females wanted to earn an A.A. degree. These differences were significant at the .006 level.

It was interesting to note differences regarding the kind of job which respondents said they wanted to achieve in five years. Over eighty percent (81.6%) of the female respondents said they wanted a job in a profession or in management as compared to 65.4% of the males. This is one of the largest differences found and it was significant at less than the .001 level.

Financing a higher education. Differences were found in how the students thought their higher eduction would be financed. For example, 21.6% of the females (compared to 19.5% of the males) said that savings would be used to finance their education. The picture changes regarding scholarships and loans with 34.3% of the males and 25.2% of the females saying that scholarships and loans would be relied upon. A sizable proportion (20.5% males versus 27.5% females) said that they did not know how they would finance going to college. These differences were significant at the .03 level.

Activities outside of school. Some traditional patterns of out-of-school activities were found. For example, females tended to participate more in private music lessons (6.4% versus 4.1%). Males were more frequently involved in out-of-school sports (36.8% versus 12.6%). And females appear to be more active in church (34.2% versus 25.4%). These differences were significant at less than the .001 level.

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

Parental Expectations and Peer Influence

Parental expectations appear to be one of the most significant influences on students' desires to go to college. Almost all of the students who said they want to go reported that their parents had encouraged them. In contrast, less than half (43.9%) of the noncollege bound students reported that their parents had offered such encouragement. Moreover, a larger proportion of majority parents than minority parents encouraged their children to continue their education. Also, a higher proportion of parents of females encouraged them to go on than did parents of males.

Not surprisingly, peers appear to influence each other in the same direction as they have been influenced by their parents. It is clear from the results of this and similar studies that parents and peers exert a major influence on students' aspirations to go to college.

Parental expectations appear to reflect prior educational attainment. For example, parents of students who aspire to go to college more often have an education beyond high school — a difference which also holds true for majority parents. In addition, majority students were more likely to have fathers in managerial or professional positions. It should not be surprising when we find that prior education level, occupational attainment, and expectations turn out to be closely related to each other and to the college-going aspirations of high school students.

Family circumstances and their influence

Family circumstances also exert a significant influence on students' opportunities to go on to postsecondary education. For example, the family structure of those aspiring to go to college differs from those who are noncollege bound. College bound students tend to come from homes in which two parents are present while the noncollege bound are more likely to have only one parent at home. This difference is also related to race with more majority students than minority students reporting living in a home with two parents. Finally, minorities in this study reported having significantly more siblings living at home than did majority students.

Family income was another variable where significant differences were found between those aspiring to go to college and those who are noncollege bound. As might be expected, the families of students who aspire to be college bound had higher incomes. This difference was also apparent when majority family incomes were compared with minority family incomes — majority families more often have an annual income in excess of $20,000.

Based on these findings, we can infer that students who live in a family with both parents and with one or no other siblings are more likely to aspire to go to college because of the parental support they may receive and because there are fewer persons dependent on the family income.

Urban versus Rural Differences

The size of the community and geographical area in which students live appear to have an influence on aspirations and the decision to apply for college. Results found in this study show that urban parents tend to be better educated than rural parents. It is not surprising, then, when we find that urban parents encourage their children to pursue postsecondary education more frequently than do rural parents. And finally, peers of urban students encourage them to pursue a college education more frequently than peers of rural students.

Urban students were more likely to have discussed college plans with a guidance counselor than their rural counterparts. In addition, the college aspirations of urban students were higher than those of rural students, with more urban students stating an intention to strive for — or beyond — the bachelor's degree. Congruent with their plans for education beyond the bachelor's degree, urban students anticipate higher earnings within five years.

Differences were found in church participation (25.7% urban versus 36.3% rural). This finding is especially interesting in that over one-third of the rural sample would be accessible to activities for communicating information about going to college through youth group activities in local churches. While there is a long standing separation between church and state, this should not be used as the reason to ignore creative uses of church youth groups in rural communities regarding the sharing of information about going to college, applying for admission, seeking financial aid, etc.

The Influence of Prior Educational Experience

Whether students wish to continue their education frequently depends on whether their prior educational experiences have been satisfying ones. While the vast majority of the students surveyed reported that they liked their teachers, there were still differences among them. It is interesting to note that those stating an aspiration to attend college reported that they liked their high school teachers more frequently than the noncollege bound. Similar patterns held true regarding elementary school experiences, with those who wish to be college bound also feeling positive about their elementary school experiences.

The GPAs of majority students were significantly higher than the GPAs of minority students. This finding has implications regarding college entrance requirements. Some degree programs have state-approved minimum GPA requirements for admission. Teacher education is one such program. Given this situation, a larger proportion of minority students will have difficulty satisfying GPA requirements for admission to a teacher training program. But selectively admitting students into teacher training programs works against increasing the number of minority students who could enter the teaching profession and serve as role models for minority youth. Clearly, increasing the achievement of minority students should remain high on the list of educational priorities.

Perceptions of Academic Preparedness

Feelings about preparation for college differed between those who aspire to go to college and those who do not. A higher proportion of those who want to be college bound report feeling prepared for college compared to those who say they are not planning to go. When analyzed by race, a higher proportion of minority students than majority students report feeling prepared for college. This is a puzzling finding since majority students in this study had an average high school GPA of 2.54 compared to 1.79 for minority students.

Grade Point Average has been found to be one of the better predictors of achievement in college. It may well be that the self-report nature of the survey instrument permitted students to "put their best foot forward." The GPA is the result of several different "evaluators" using several "samples" of achievement. Grades, to be sure, contain a subjective element on the part of the grader. Nonetheless, the GPA is based on judgments by many different evaluators using many different achievement tasks. Thus, GPA is probably a more reliable and valid index of a student's preparation for college.

There is another explanation which must be considered. The higher proportion of minority student feeling prepared for college could stem from having participated in enhancement programs such as the Precollegiate Program, Upward Bound, or some other special program. These programs focus on preparing minority students for college. Whether these feelings of preparedness will have instrumental value once the students enroll in college remains to be seen.

Another component of preparedness for college is whether students have had an opportunity to try college level work prior to actually attending college. This could be done through enrolling in advanced placement classes. But enrolling in such classes depends on being aware of their existence and in understanding the benefits that can be derived by participating in such a class. This study found that majority students more often knew about opportunities to complete college level work while in high school than did minorities. More than one-third of the minority students were unaware of advanced placement opportunities compared to only one-fourth of the majority students.

Students' Future Career Plans

As might be expected, those aspiring to go to college attach greater importance to the role of college in their future. Those aspiring to go to college see themselves in good jobs within five years. However, the noncollege bound students also see themselves in good jobs. Will the college bound and noncollege bound have the same opportunities to obtain and advance in "good job" occupations to the same degree? How realistic are these job aspirations given the importance of educational attainment in job mobility and career advancement?

Most students aspiring to go to college anticipate being in managerial or professional positions. Whether these aspirations are attainable is debatable. Only 16% of the noncollege bound in this sample see themselves in sales or in skilled labor.

Sex differences were also found. For example, a higher proportion of males than females anticipated high earnings. But more females expected positions in managment or in a profession.

The Role of Counseling

The results of this study suggest that students receive counseling regarding going to college from a variety of sources. Sources of information include: counselors, teachers, and published brochures.

Those aspiring to go to college see counselors more frequently than the noncollege bound. The study results suggest that race does not appear to be related to the frequency of counselor visits. But race is related to the topics discussed.

The topics discussed with the counselor vary. The most frequent topic of discussion was course scheduling. Testing was also a frequent topic of discussion. But majority students discussed college plans more frequently with their counselors than did minority students while minority students reported discussing career plans more often.

One of the most important issues regarding college attendance is how it will be financed. There is cause for concern here in that only 4.0% of those stating an intent to go to college reported having discussions regarding financial aid.

Given these results, we need to ask how counseling agendas are set for students. While course scheduling and testing are important short term issues, they should not preclude discussions regarding long term issues such as career choice and career planning.

The results of this study draw our attention to availability of counselors to meet the needs of students. If there are insufficient numbers of counselors in school, what are some alternate means for meeting the guidance and counseling needs of students?

To whom do students turn for assistance if they feel troubled? Teachers were named as frequently as guidance counselor by both the college bound and noncollege bound. Teachers are in more frequent contact with students, seeing them on a daily basis, and are more accessible in general. Because of frequency of contact, students may feel more comfortable with teachers than they do with the less frequently seen guidance counselor.

When analyzed by race, majority students are more likely to talk to teachers about their problems than are minority students. On the other hand, minority students more often turn to the guidance counselor. Important implications emerge from this finding. If minority students use their teachers less frequently to solve personal problems, is it because most teachers are white? If so, then this supports the necessity of having more minority teachers available to serve as role models.

Providing information about colleges, admissions, and financial aid is only one of the several tasks which guidance counselors are expected to perform. There are usually too few counselors within a school to adequately meet the needs of all students.

Utilizing teachers as advisors is supported by the results of this study as one-third of the students say they frequently rely on teachers to help them solve personal problems. Herein lies a dilemma. First, teachers may not have the skills to be effective counselors. Second, they may not have sufficient time because of the number of classes and students which they must teach. And third, increasing the number of minority teachers appears imperative if minority students are to be provided with appropriate role models with whom they can identify to help them solve personal problems. Clearly, teachers are an important potential guidance resource. The question is how to make guidance a legitimate function for teachers and to provide them with incentives, the skills, and the time to do it.

Participation in Extracurricular Activities

While most students reported participating in some kind of extracurricular activities, those intending to go to college reported higher levels of participation. It was also found that majority students participated in more extracurricular activites than minorities.

Participation in school activities contributes to students' feeling of belonging. This may in turn contribute to their satisfaction with school and development of a positive attitude toward continuing their education beyond high school.

But participating in extracurricular activities requires a favorable set of family circumstances. The survey results show that majority students and minority students have different patterns of after school behavior. For example, majority students more often reported having part-time work while minority students more often reported having responsibilities for taking care of siblings at home. Minority students also more frequently reported having housekeeping responsibilities. One byproduct of these responsibilities in the home may be a reduction in the level of participation in extracurricular activities and a subsequent reduction in a feeling of "belongingness" in school.

Knowledge of Financial Aid

Obtaining the financial resources required to attend college is probably one of the greatest barriers to overcome for those who may have academic talent but who come from economically disadvantaged family circumstances. The results of this study suggest that approximately 80% of the respondents felt well informed regarding knowledge of financial aid. Of those who did not feel well informed, whites had the highest percentage (25%).

The major source of information about financial aid was brochures followed by guidance counselors. Students who say they are getting adequate information from printed materials may erroneously assume that knowing about financial aid is sufficient to obtain it.

But applying for financial aid is a process that requires completing forms. These forms are complex and ask for family financial information which may not be readily available unless the parents keep good financial records.

Students who have decided to go to college reported that they have confidence in their ability to find adequate resources. Even though white students reported feeling unsure of finding finances more frequently, they said that they would rely on savings, scholarships and work study more often than minorities. Minorities, on the other hand, said that they would rely on scholarships and loans more frequently than majority students. We can only wonder whether these assumptions about finding financial resources are realistic.

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APPENDICES

A	Letter Mailed to Superintendents
B	Questionnaire
C	Academic Information Form
D	Commissioner Betty Castor's Letter of Endorsement
E	Letter Mailed to Principals
F	Letter Mailed to Guidance Counselors
G	Parent Consent Form
H	Parent Consent Form (Interview)
I	Student Consent Form
J	Instructions for Administering the Survey

STATE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM OF FLORIDA
FLORIDA INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

September 29, 1987

Dear Superintendent

I write to request permission to survey a selected group of your twelfth graders as a part of a statewide study being conducted by the Florida Institute of Education (for detailed information on the Institute please see Attachment I). The major purpose of the study is to examine the academic, motivational, economic, and demographic barriers that preclude minority or disadvantaged students from seeking higher education. A more comprehensive and detailed overview of the research purpose, goals, questions, and methodology is enclosed (please see Attachment II). For the study we will need randomly selected black 12th grade students who expect to graduate in the spring of 1988. We would like for some of these students to come from in your district.

To gather data we will need to conduct student interviews using a structured interview format. We will, moreover, need the service of counselors in the schools to gather and record a small amount of demographic and academic data (please see Attachment III). For this service we are prepared to pay the counselor a $50.00 honorarium. Conducting the interviews will be educators and graduate students from your area who will have attended special training sessions conducted by our senior researcher and research associates.

University of North Florida • P. O. Box 17074 • Jacksonville, Florida 32216 • Telephone 904-646-2496

Appendix A

We will, of course, provide you with a copy of the final report when completed. You may rest assured that full confidentiality will be adhered to as mandated by law and dictated by our professional ethics. We would appreciate your giving this matter your immediate attention and responding to us by October 15, 1987. If we can be of further assistance, please call me or Mrs. Ethel Brooks at (904) 646-2496 or SunCom 861-2496. Thank you for your cooperation and consideration.

Sincerely,

Andrew A. Robinson

Andrew A. Robinson
Director

Enclosures (3)

QUESTIONNAIRE

1. What do you intend to do the first year following your graduation from high school?

a = continue my education
b = get married
c = get a full-time job
d = join the military
e = other_____

2. What was the most important influence in making the decision above?

a = advice of family (e.g., parent(s), guardian(s), spouse, other relative)
b = advice of friends
c = advice of teacher or counselor
d = relationship to career plans
e = other_____

3. If your answer to Question 1 was "continue my education," do you intend to go to a college or university?

a = yes
b = no
c = not applicable

4. Do you believe college is

a = not at all necessary for a good future
b = somewhat necessary for a good future
c = very necessary for a good future

5. If you have decided not to attend college, is it because

a = you don't feel that you have college ability
b = you believe you can't afford to go to college
c = you don't think college is important
d = other_____
e = not applicable

6. If you plan to continue your education after high school, what is the highest level of education you plan to complete beyond high school?

a = a two-year degree
b = a four-year bachelor's degree
c = master's or higher degree
d = other_____
e = not applicable

7. Five years from now, do you see yourself working in a good job?

a = strongly disagree
b = disagree
c = strongly agree
d = agree

8. What general area do you see yourself working in five years from now?

a = labor (for example, construction)
b = managerial (for example, office or business)
c = professional (for example, doctor, teacher)
d = sales
e = other_____

9. If you are considering teaching as a profession, would you choose teaching because

a = salary
b = teachers are respected
c = work schedule
d = other_____
e = not applicable

10. If you would <u>not</u> consider teaching as a profession, is it because

a = you don't think you would enjoy being a teacher
b = salary
c = you don't feel that you could be a good teacher
d = other_____
e = not applicable

11. After you graduate from high school, are your parent(s) or guardian(s) encouraging you to

a = attend college
b = work full time
c = join the military
d = get married
e = other _____

12. After you graduate from high school, are your friends encouraging you to

a = attend college
b = work full time
c = join the military
d = get married
e = other _____

Appendix B

13. How much money do you plan to earn per year five years from now?

a = less than $10,000
b = between $10,000 and $20,000
c = between $21,000 and $30,000
d = between $31,000 and $40,000
e = more than $40,000

14. Which of the following best describes your family situation?

a = living with both natural parents
b = living with one natural parent and one step parent
c = living with one natural parent
d = living with step parent(s)
e = living with relatives

15. How many brothers and sisters live in the same household with you and your parent(s) or guardian(s)?

a = none
b = one
c = two
d = three
e = four or more

16. Indicate the highest level of education completed by your father or male guardian.

a = grade school
b = high school
c = business or trade school
d = college
e = graduate or professional degree

17. Indicate the highest level of education completed by your mother or female guardian.

a = grade school
b = high school
c = business or trade school
d = college
e = graduate or professional degree

18. How many persons are dependent on your parent(s) or legal guardian for financial support? Be sure to include your parent(s) and yourself.

a = two
b = three
c = four
d = five
e = six or more

19. What do you estimate to be the approximate income of your parent(s) or legal guardian(s) before taxes last year?

a = less than $3,000 per year
b = between $3,000 and $8,999
c = between $9,000 and $19,999
d = between $20,000 and $29,999
e = $30,000 or more

20. Which of the following best describes your male parent or guardian's occupation?

a = labor (for example, construction)
b = managerial (for example, office or business)
c = professional (for example, doctor, teacher)
d = sales
e = other_____

21. Which of the following best describes your female parent or guardian's occupation?

a = labor (for example, construction)
b = managerial (for example, office or business)
c = professional (for example, doctor, teacher)
d = sales
e = other_____

22. Which of the following best describes your present high school program?

a = academic or college preparatory
b = general
c = career-oriented (business, vocational, industrial arts)
d = other_____

23. Which of the following best describes your feelings about the preparation your high school courses provided for college?

a = not prepared at all
b = somewhat prepared
c = prepared
d = very well prepared

24. Which of the following best describes your feelings about the preparation your high school courses provided for a job following high school?

a = not prepared at all
b = somewhat prepared
c = prepared
d = very well prepared

25. To what extent would you agree that your high school has prepared you with regard to study skills?

a = not at all prepared
b = somewhat prepared
c = prepared
d = well prepared

26. To what extent would you agree that your high school has prepared you with regard to test-taking skills?

a = not at all prepared
b = somewhat prepared
c = prepared
d = well prepared

27. Have you found high school academic work

a = easy
b = moderately easy
c = moderately difficult
d = difficult
e = very difficult

28. To what extent do you agree that your grades are generally appropriate to the level of work you have performed?

a = strongly disagree
b = disagree
c = agree
d = strongly agree

29. To what extent do you agree that you have liked most of your high school teachers?

a = strongly disagree
b = disagree
c = agree
d = strongly agree

30. To what extent do you agree that college level work will be much more difficult than high school work?

a = strongly disagree
b = disagree
c = agree
d = strongly agree

31. To what extent do you agree that you are well prepared for college level work?

a = strongly disagree
b = disagree
c = agree
d = strongly agree
e = not applicable

32. During your years in high school, how much have you participated in extracurricular activities such as clubs or athletics?

a = not at all
b = one extracurricular activity
c = two extracurricular activities
d = three extracurricular activities
e = four or more extracurricular activities

33. During all of your school years, have you received any awards or honors, such as being elected an officer in a club, winning a contest, or receiving an athletic award?

a = none
b = one or two
c = three or four
d = five or six
e = seven or more

34. To what extent would you agree that you found elementary school to be a pleasurable experience, on the whole?

a = strongly disagree
b = disagree
c = agree
d = strongly agree

35. In addition to your academic and extra-curricular activities, have you participated in any academic enrichment activities outside of school?

a = McKnight Centers of Excellence
b = Joe Berg Society
c = College Reach-Out
d = other_____
e = not applicable

36. Have you been involved in any of the following activities outside of school?

a = private music lessons
b = organized sports activities
c = church activities
d = other_____
e = not applicable

37. To what extent would you agree that you found high school to be a pleasurable experience, on the whole?

a = strongly disagree
b = disagree
c = agree
d = strongly agree

38. How many times have you met with your guidance counselor?

a = not at all
b = one
c = two or three
d = four or five
e = six or more

39. Do you know your guidance counselor's name?

a = yes
b = no

40. When meeting with your guidance counselor, have you had discussions regarding

a = your course schedule
b = testing
c = attendance
d = discipline
e = personal problems

41. When meeting with your guidance counselor, have you had discussions regarding

a = career plans
b = preparation for college
c = financial aid for college
d = choice of colleges
e = other_____

42. Were you aware of any opportunities to complete college level work prior to high school completion (e.g., Advanced Placement classes)?

a = unaware
b = aware

43. Will you have completed any college level work before entering college (e.g., Advanced Placement classes, CLEP exams)?

a = none
b = one or more AP classes
c = one or more CLEP exams
d = not applicable

44. If you have decided to attend college and have selected the college or school you wish to attend, what factors influenced your choice?

a = financial
b = location
c = programs available
d = other_____
e = not applicable

45. If you intend to continue your education beyond high school, how would you describe your knowledge of the admissions requirements for the college or university you wish to attend?

a = not at all informed
b = somewhat informed
c = informed
d = well informed
e = not applicable

46. Who/what has been your major source of information regarding college admissions?

a = guidance counselor
b = brochures/information from colleges/universities
c = teachers
d = friends
e = other_____

47. If you intend to continue your education beyond high school, how would you describe your knowledge of financial aid available to you for attending the college or university you wish to attend?

a = not at all informed
b = somewhat informed
c = informed
d = well informed
e = not applicable

48. Who/what has been your major source of information regarding financial aid for continuing your education?

a = guidance counselor
b = brochures/information from colleges/universities
c = teachers
d = friends
e = other_____

49. To what extent would you agree that you will be able to find adequate financial resources, if you decide to continue your education?

a = strongly disagree
b = disagree
c = agree
d = strongly agree
e = not applicable

50. If you intend to continue your education, is it because you

a = believe education is necessary to get a job
b = your parent(s) or legal guardian(s) insist
c = you want to continue to be with your friends
d = other_____
e = not applicable

51. You will finance further education by

a = savings
b = scholarships/loans
c = workstudy/work
d = don't know
e = not applicable

52. If you have decided not to continue your education, what has been the major reason(s) for that decision?

a = finances
b = distance to college/university
c = feelings of inadeqate academic preparation
d = other_____
e = not applicable

53. If you have decided not to continue your education, do you plan to continue your education at a later time?

a = yes
b = no
c = not applicable

54. If you answered YES to Question 53, in what setting will you continue your education?

a = community college, college, or university
b = vocational/technical school
c = military program
d = other_____
e = not applicable

55. Have you decided on your career (including homemaking)?

a = yes
b = no

56. If you are presently undecided about your future plans, to whom are you most likely to turn for advice?

a = family member
b = friend
c = teacher/counselor
d = other_____
e = not applicable

57. Throughout high school, which one(s) of the following persons (OUTSIDE OF SCHOOL) would you turn to for help if you felt troubled?

a = parent(s) or guardian(s)
b = minister
c = other family member
d = friend
e = other_____

58. Throughout high school, which one(s) of the following persons (WITHIN SCHOOL) would you turn to for help if you felt troubled?

a = teacher
b = guidance counselor
c = principal
d = assistant principal or dean
e = other_____

59. Throughout high school, have you had any of the following additional responsibilities?

a = part-time work
b = care of younger brothers or sisters
c = care of an older relative
d = regular household responsibilities/chores
e = other_____

60. Have you completed an application to attend any community college, college, or university?

a = yes
b = no

61. If your answer to the preceding question was YES, enter the name(s) of the institution(s) to which you've applied on the line below.

_____

62. Your sex is

a = male
b = female

63. Your age is

a = under 16
b = 16 - 17
c = 18 - 19
d = 20 - 21
e = over 21

64. Which of the following best describes your ethnic background?

a = Asian American
b = Black American
c = Hispanic American
d = White American
e = other

ACADEMIC REPORT FORM

Control No. _____

Name _____

Social Security No. _____

School No. _____

Date of Birth: _____ Date of Graduation: _____

Course Program:

Basic	_____	Developing	_____
Career	_____	General	_____
Academic	_____	Advanced	_____

No. of Credits Received:

English	_____
Math	_____
Science	_____
Social Studies	_____
Foreign Language	_____
Honors Courses	_____
College Credit	_____

Test Scores:

Standardized Achievement	_____
SAT	_____
ACT	_____

Grade Point Average: _____ Class Standing: _____

Awards received: _____

_____

Remediation received: _____

_____

Extracurricular activities noted:

Attendance:

Absences _____ Expulsions _____ Retentions _____

Appendix C

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Betty Castor
Commissioner of Education

October 1, 1987

Dear _____:

Those of us involved in education would agree that education is a major determinant of a more economically successful and more personally satisfying life in our society. Therefore, it is cause for concern that while minorities in the United States are better educated today than they were twenty-five years ago, they remain underrepresented in higher education and overrepresented in the college drop-out rates.

By now, you should have received information regarding a major, statewide study which is being conducted by the Florida Institute of Education. This study titled, "Myths and Realities of Perceived Opportunities to Higher Education by Black High School Graduates," will survey 550 randomly selected black high school seniors regarding their decision whether or not to pursue additional education following graduation from high school. The knowledge derived from this study will be shared statewide, and should provide valuable information for future planning.

I am supportive of this effort to provide useful information and hope that your district will have an opportunity to participate.

Sincerely,

Betty Castor
Commissioner of Education

The Capitol · Tallahassee, Florida 32399 · (904) 487-1785
Affirmative action/equal opportunity employer

STATE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM OF FLORIDA

FLORIDA INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

December 1, 1987

Dear

The Florida Institute of Education (FIE) is conducting a major, statewide study which will examine the academic, motivational, economic, and demographic barriers which may preclude minority students from seeking higher education. We must survey a randomly selected sample of Florida's students to serve as a data base for the study. Your superintendent has given permission for your school to participate in this study.

A sample of two of your twelfth grade English classes will be needed to participate in the study. Please provide a schedule of all twelfth grade English classes being taught this term at your school (a copy of your regular English class schedule will do). Our research staff will randomly select two classes. The students in these classes will be administered a survey questionnaire (Attachment I) by a trained survey administrator. This procedure will require approximately 20 to 30 minutes of class time.

We also ask that you identify a guidance counselor who would be willing to assist with data gathering in return for a small stipend of $50. The guidance counselor will conduct the following tasks: (1) complete a demographic form (Attachment II) on each student to be surveyed in the study; (2) obtain a signed Parent Consent Form for each student (Attachment III); and (3) serve as a liaison between the classroom teacher and the FIE survey administrator.

The findings will be published in a report which will be sent to each school district which participated in the study. In addition, the results will be shared at a statewide College Reach-Out Conference to be held in Orlando in March 1988. All data will be reported anonymously, and no individual students nor schools will be identified by name.

Please return (1) the enclosed Counselor Identification Form and (2) a copy of the twelfth grade English class schedule in the envelope provided by Monday, December 7, 1987. Your assistance with this study will be invaluable. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at (904) 646-2496, or Suncom 861-2496. I will be happy to discuss the study with you in greater detail.

Sincerely,

Andrew A. Robinson
Project Director

Enclosures (3)

University of North Florida • P. O. Box 17074 • Jacksonville, Florida 32216 • Telephone 904-646-2496

STATE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM OF FLORIDA

FLORIDA INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

December 10, 1987

Dear

The Florida Institute of Education (FIE) is conducting a major, statewide study of high school seniors. It is our hope that the findings of this study will provide insight into the reasons why some students choose not to pursue postsecondary education.

Thank you for agreeing to help us with the data collection process at your school. Without your assistance, we would not be able to complete this study.

Data will be collected in two basic forms: the administration of a questionnaire (which we have already arranged to do) and the completion of the Academic Information Forms by counselors such as yourself.

We have randomly selected two twelfth grade English classes to participate in this study: sixth period English IV class and seventh period English IV class. Before we may begin collecting data, however, it is necessary to have a signed Parent Consent Form for each student who will be participating. Enclosed are Parent Consent Forms which you will need to have students in those two classes take home for their parents' signatures.

The survey is to be administered in those classes Thursday, December 17, 1987. However, we would like to have both distributed and collected the signed Parent Consent Forms no later than Wednesday, December 16th.

The survey administrator, Ms. Vanessa Palmore, will be coming by your office at least 30 minutes prior to the class, and will at that time need the signed Parent Consent Forms, along with a list of those students who did not return signed consent forms. Please arrange with the two aforementioned teachers for those students who have not returned their signed forms to have library or study hall passes in order that they not be in the classroom during the administration of the survey.

University of North Florida • P. O. Box 17074 • Jacksonville, Florida 32216 • Telephone 904-646-2496

December 10, 1987

As a part of the survey administration, the administrator will also have students complete the first three lines of the Academic Information Form in preparation for your completion of the remainder of the form. As soon as the survey is completed, these forms will be returned to you, along with a self addressed, stamped envelope, for your completion.

You will be completing an Academic Information Form for each student who completed the survey during the class period. These forms need to be completed and returned to the Institute in the envelope provided no later than one week following the administration of the test.

Because a stipend is being paid for this work, it will be necessary that you complete the work either before school, during lunch break, or after school.

You are a valued link in the research process. Thank you again for consenting to assist us. If you have any questions, please feel free to call Ms. Ethel B. Brooks or Dr. Betty Meers at (904) 646-2496 or 2967. We want to provide you with any backup assistance you require.

Sincerely,

Andrew A. Robinson, Ed.D.
Project Director

Enclosure

cc:

PARENT CONSENT FORM

Dear Parent or Guardian:

During the next few weeks, the Florida Institute of Education will be conducting a survey of a sample of high school seniors in your area. The purpose of the survey is to obtain information regarding career or education plans of high school seniors following graduation.

No student who participates in the study will be identified by name. Only summary responses for groups of students will be reported in the study. The results of the study will be made available to you if you wish to review them.

We would like for your child to participate in this project. It will consist of completing a questionnaire concerning your child's educational experiences and plans.

The information gathered from this survey will be used to improve planning for meeting the educational needs of students in Florida. If you are willing to have your child participate, please sign below and return this letter in the enclosed envelope.

Sincerely,

Andrew A. Robinson

Andrew A. Robinson, Ed.D.
Project Director

I consent to my child's (children's) _____
print name(s)

participation in the survey described above.

_____ _____
Signature of Parent or Guardian Date

PARENTAL CONSENT FORM
(Interview)

Dear Parent:

The Florida Institute of Education, a part of the State University System, has received permission to conduct research in your child's school. As a part of that research, you previously consented to your child's completing a survey questionnaire.

In addition to the questionnaire, we would now like to have your permission for your child to participate in a follow-up interview. A trained interviewer will ask your child questions about his/her educational and career plans in an effort to determine some of the influences which lead to the decision to attend college. The questions may include academic and home experiences.

Through this research, the Institute hopes to find out what influences the student's decision whether or not to attend college. We will need your permission to have your child participate in the interview. The interviews will take place in late December or early January at a time and place convenient for your child.

The information collected will be permanently stored without student names attached in the Institute's office at the University of North Florida. The information will be released to no one. Released findings of this research will contain no student names or other identifying information.

Please fill in the form below and have your child return to the school. Your assistance is appreciated and your comments are welcome. Thank you for your time, and we look forward to receiving your response as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

Andrew A. Robinson hm

Andrew A. Robinson, Ed.D.
Research Director
Florida Institute of Education
(904) 646-2967

Child's Name_____

___You have my permission to have my child participate in your research.

___You do not have my permission to have my child participate in your research.

_____ _____

Parent's Signature Date

Appendix H

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Dear Student:

A survey study is being conducted by the Florida Institute of Education. Your responses to this survey may help teachers, principals, counselors, and others interested in education to plan more effectively for the education of future students. The results of this study will be reported anonymously. Only summary responses for groups of students will be reported, and individual students participating in this study will not be identified.

You will be asked to complete a questionnaire. You may choose not to answer or to stop at any time; however, you are urged to participate fully, because the information obtained will be of value in improving educational opportunities for students. The results of the study will be made available to you if you wish to review them.

I have read the information above, and I understand the procedure described above. I agree to participate in the project.

_____ _____

Student Date

_____ _____

Witness Date

INSTRUCTIONS FOR ADMINISTERING SURVEY

When you first arrive at the school, go to the principal's office and introduce yourself. Ask if you may be directed to the counselor's office. The counselor will have been notified to expect you. Plan to arrive at least 30 minutes prior to the beginning of the class which will be used in the survey.

Pick up from the counselor the signed Parent Consent Forms (green forms) and the list of students for whom there are no signed Parent Consent Forms. It is important to remember that ONLY THOSE STUDENTS FOR WHOM THERE ARE SIGNED PARENT CONSENT FORMS MAY PARTICIPATE IN THE STUDY. The counselor will have made other arrangements for those students who cannot participate. Ask the counselor to direct you to the classroom where the survey is to be administered.

Once in the classroom, introduce yourself to the teacher. As soon as she/he has turned over the classroom to you, you may begin as follows.

1. ADMINISTRATOR SAYS: I am _____with the Florida Institute of Education.

You are being asked to take part in a voluntary survey which is being given to more than 1,000 high school seniors across the state of Florida in Florida public schools.

This survey is being conducted to identify the experiences which can affect a high school graduate's decision whether or not to attend college. Your participation in this study will be of great value.

As you answer the questions, you may be honest, because your answers will be kept completely confidential; they will not be shared with anyone at your high school. Also, your name will not be identified with your answers in any way when the results of the study are compiled.

The questionnaire asks questions about your personal background, your educational background, your plans for further education, and your career plans. There are no right or wrong answers, but it is important that you be as honest as you can.

The questionnaire is untimed; however, it is generally best to move along at a steady pace, not spending long amounts of time on any one item. If you complete the questionnaire ahead of your classmates, please work quietly at your seat in order that others may complete theirs undisturbed.

2. DISTRIBUTE STUDENT INFORMED CONSENT FORMS (yellow forms). Ask students to read and sign these forms, and to use the date you are administering the survey. Do not collect these forms, yet.

3. PASS OUT SCANTRON ANSWER FORMS, NO. 2 PENCILS, AND THE ACADEMIC REPORT FORM. READ THE FOLLOWING INSTRUCTIONS:

ADMINISTRATOR SAYS:

Print your name clearly on the computerized beige and white Scantron form on the line marked "Name."

On the line marked "Subject," enter your social security number.

(Hold up the answer sheet and show students.)

TAKE TIME TO BE SURE THAT ALL STUDENTS UNDERSTAND THE INSTRUCTIONS. GO TO STUDENTS WHO APPEAR TO BE HAVING DIFFICULTY COMPLETING ANSWER SHEET CORRECTLY.

ADMINISTRATOR SAYS:

On the form labeled "Academic Report Form," enter the two digit code number that appears on the "Hour" line of the Scantron Answer Form on the line marked "Control No."

Now, complete your name and social security number, exactly as you entered them on the Scantron Form.

Next, enter your two digit code number from the Scantron Answer Form on the upper right hand corner of the yellow Informed Consent Form.

AGAIN, TAKE TIME TO BE SURE THAT ALL STUDENTS UNDERSTAND.

ADMINISTRATOR SAYS:

Please pass the Academic Report Form and the Informed Consent Form forward, but keep your Scantron Answer Forms.

4. COLLECT ACADEMIC REPORT FORMS AND YELLOW INFORMED CONSENT FORMS. PLACE ACADEMIC REPORT FORMS IN SMALL BROWN ENVELOPE, TO BE LEFT WITH COUNSELOR AFTER QUESTIONNAIRE IS ADMINISTERED.

PLACE YELLOW INFORMED CONSENT FORMS IN LARGE BROWN ENVELOPE, TO BE RETURNED TO FIE WITH SCANTRON ANSWER FORMS AND QUESTIONNAIRES FOLLOWING COMPLETION OF THE SURVEY.

5. DISTRIBUTE QUESTIONNAIRES.

ADMINISTRATOR SAYS:

Please read the questions from the questionnaire, select the answer which is most accurate for you, and blacken in with your No. 2 pencil the letter of the appropriate response. Avoid stray pencil marks, and be sure to blacken the appropriate space completely. Be sure to match the question number with the appropriate space on the answer form, or the computer will read your responses incorrectly.

You may now begin. Remember, there are no right or wrong answers. The important thing is that your answers reflect your feelings about these issues.

6. COMPLETE CONFIRMATION LIST. Use the time while the students are completing the questionnaire to complete the Confirmation List.

7. TIMELINES

At least 10 minutes prior to the end of the class period, if all students have not completed the questionnaire, the ADMINISTRATOR SAYS:

You have five minutes in which to complete the questionnaire.

At the end of five minutes, ask students to pass forward the Scantron Answer Forms, then the questionnaires and the pencils.

Place the Scantron Answer Forms, yellow Informed Consent Forms, and questionnaires in the large brown, preaddressed and stamped envelope. These are to be mailed back to the Florida Institute of Education no later than the day following administration of the survey.

Thank you for your participation in the data collecting process for this study. Your assistance makes the study possible.

COLLEGE REACH-OUT CONFERENCE

The Delta Court of Flags
Orlando, Florida
May 4-6, 1988

Sponsored by

THE FLORIDA INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
and
THE STATE OF FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
COLLEGE REACH-OUT PROGRAM

WELCOME

Dear Conference Participants:

Welcome to the Second Annual Statewide College Reach-Out Conference. This conference, which is being sponsored by the Florida Institute of Education in collaboration with the State Department of Education College Reach-Out Program, will focus on ways to help you — concerned educators — strengthen the precollegiate academic experiences of our secondary school students.

Through our combined efforts we can accomplish the goal of REACHING OUT to all students in order to ensure that opportunities for educational achievement become the order of the day.

Sincerely,

Betty Castor
Commissioner of Education

Charles B. Reed
Chancellor
State University System

Clark Maxwell, Jr.
Executive Director
Community College System

COLLEGE REACH-OUT PROGRAM GOALS

This conference will focus on the findings of a major, statewide study conducted by the Florida Institute of Education titled "Variables Affecting High School Seniors' Aspirations and Decisions to Attend College." Conference sessions will explore the applications of those findings to the College Reach-Out Program goals, which are:

A. Identification of students who do not realize the value of postsecondary education or who are otherwise unmotivated to pursue college preparation programs.

B. Identification of students who are not developing the basic learning skills required to participate in postsecondary education.

C. Counseling and advising students and their parents on the benefits of postsecondary education, opportunities for financial aid, and the preparation needed for participation. Such counseling should expose students to collegiate requirements, activities, and opportunities. These sessions may occur in a variety of settings, including the school, the college, the home, in community centers as part of the activities of groups such as the Girl and Boy Scouts, athletic teams, and churches.

D. Providing supplemental instruction, over and above compensatory education and other such existing programs, in reading, writing, study skills, mathematics, and additional subjects necessary to prepare for postsecondary education. Such instruction may be offered at the school, after school, at a college, or in other meetings.

E. Counseling and instruction to help students realize the positive relationship between good learning skills and economic and social mobility.

PROGRAM

Wednesday, May 4, 1988

12:00 noon..... Registration .....Royal Banner Lobby

6:00 p.m. - 7:30 p.m. .....**OPENING SESSION**.....The Pool/Empire

Reception and Information Exchange

Greetings
Keynote Address
The Honorable Cecil B. Keene
Member, The Florida Board of Regents

Thursday, May 5, 1988

8:00 a.m. - 9:00 a.m. ..... Morning Coffee .....Royal Banner Lobby

9:00 a.m. - 10:30 a.m. ..... **GENERAL SESSION I** .....Empire

Opening Statements - Conference Proceedings - Pilot Study
and Overview of Statewide Study

10:30 a.m. - 10: 45 a.m. ..... B R E A K

10:45 a.m. - 12:00 noon ..... **GENERAL SESSION II** .....Empire

Implications of the Research Findings

12:00 noon - 1:30 p.m. ..... **LUNCH** .....Imperial

Speaker
Dr. Lana D. Muraskin
Senior Policy Analyst

1:30 p. m. - 3:00 p.m. ..... **GENERAL SESSION III** .....Empire

Implications of the Research Findings

5:00 p.m. .....Depart for Hilton

6:00 p.m. - 10:00 p.m. ..... Reception & Dinner .....Hilton At Walt Disney
World Village

THE FREDERICK H. SCHULTZ DISTINGUISHED LECTURE
ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND EDUCATIONAL POLICY

The Honorable Bill Clinton
Governor of Arkansas

PROGRAM
Friday, May 6, 1988

8:00 a.m. - 9:00 a.m. ..... Morning Coffee .....Royal Banner Lobby

9:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m. ..... **GENERAL SESSION IV** .....Imperial

Parent/Student Views of College Reach-Out

10:00 a.m. - 10:15 a.m. .....B R E A K

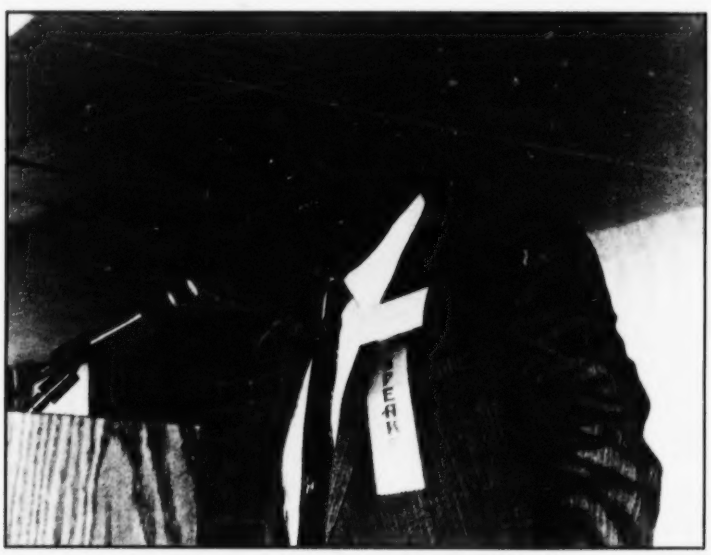
10:15 a.m. - 11:15 a.m..... **GENERAL SESSION V** ..... Imperial

Case Study

11:15 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. ..... Lunch/Closure .....Imperial

Speaker

Lillie Shelton
Assistant to the Chancellor
and
Director, Equal Opportunity Programs



Regent Cecil B. Keene keynotes the opening session of the Second Annual Statewide College Reach-Out Conference.

PANELISTS

Robert Belle
Director, Minority Student Services
University of Central Florida
Orlando, Florida

Benjamin Campbell
Consultant
Human Resource and Management
Development, Inc.
Jacksonville, Florida

Eddie Collins, Jr.
Assistant Professor of Sociology and
Political Science
University of North Florida
Jacksonville, Florida

Rozalia Davis
Associate Director
Student Development Services
Florida International University
Miami, Florida

Sabrina Eaton
Graduate Student
Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University
Tallahassee, Florida

Omega Gardner
Assistant to the President
University of West Florida
Pensacola, Florida

Malinda Hayes
Consultant
Hayes-Belle Associates
Orlando, Florida

Janet Johnson
Associate Professor
Education Department, Director of
Upward Bound and Student Support Services
and Career Beginnings
Jacksonville University
Jacksonville, Florida

Mattie Medlock
Career Counselor
A. Philip Randolph Northside
Skills Center
Jacksonville, Florida

Betty Meers
Research Associate
Florida Institute of Education
University of North Florida
Jacksonville, Florida

Vanessa Palmore
South Regional Coordinator
Precollegiate Program
Florida Institute of Education
Miami, Florida

Sevilla Phillips
Graduate Student
Florida Agricultural and Mechanical
University
Tallahassee, Florida

Mary Smith
Assistant Director of Financial Aid
Florida State University
Tallahassee, Florida

Louise J. Streete
Counselor
Gainesville High School
Gainesville, Florida

Geraldine Thompson
EA/EO Officer and Assistant to the President
for Equal Opportunity
Valencia Community College
Orlando, Florida

QUESTIONS AND RESPONDING PANELISTS

1. What is the relationship between the counseling students receive and the decision to attend college?
   Eddie Collins and Louise Streete

2. What is the relationship between students' perceptions of academic preparedness and the decision to attend college?
   Janet Johnson

3. What are the relationships among variables such as class rank, GPA, taking college entry tests, and the decision to attend college?
   Benjamin Campbell

4. What are the relationships among variables such as students' participation in extra-curricular activities or outside enrichment activities, and the decision to attend college?
   Sabrina Eaton and Geraldine Thompson

5. What are the relationships among variables such as parental expectations and peer influence, and the decision to attend college?
   Rozalia Davis and Sevilla Phillips

6. What are the relationships among variables such as geographic location (urban vs. rural), number of siblings, family income, parents' level of education, and the decision to attend college?
   Omega Gardner and Malinda Hayes

7. What is the relationship between students' future career plans and the decision to attend college?
   Mattie Medlock and Vanessa Palmore

8. What is the relationship between students' knowledge of financial aid and the decision to attend college?
   Robert Belle and Mary Smith

EDDIE COLLINS, JR.

WHAT IS THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE COUNSELING STUDENTS RECEIVE AND THE DECISION TO ATTEND COLLEGE?

REACTION

When one analyzes this questions, which examines the relationship between frequency of seeing a counselor and the decision to attend college, there is a significant relationship.

Of the college bound students, 27% have seen a counselor six (6) or more times during their senior year. Of the non-college bound, only 7% have seen a counselor six or more times during their senior year. The difference between these two groups is significant at the .05 level.

The fact that college bound students see their counselors more often may simply reflect the fact that those who expect to be admitted to college are aware of the support and technical advise which counselors provide. It may also reflect a bias on the part of counselors — that is, they may seek out those whom they feel are more likely to attend college than those whom they feel are less likely to attend.

When one examines the relationship between frequency of counselor visits on the basis of race/ethnicity white vs. minority, there is no significant difference. This can probably be explained in terms of different reasons between the two groups for seeing their counselors. That is, whites generally see their counselors for academic reasons, such as scheduling, enrolling in advanced courses, and receiving information relative to attending college, while minority students tend to see their counselors concerning disciplinary, behavior, and work related matters. Thus, both groups see their counselors at about the same frequency but for entirely different reasons. Only 46% of the minority students surveyed reported having discussed with their counselor plans to attend college (as compared to 58% for white students).

In terms of where students receive their information relative to college admissions, both college bound and non-college bound indicated less reliance upon counselors and teachers and more on printed material. This fact reflects the tendency of high schools to maintain what is called a college resource area in which college related material is made available on a handout basis.

College bound students also indicated that they received as much information from their friends relative to college admission as they received from counselors. This simply underscores the importance of the peer-group network and the social environment. Having friends who attend or expect to attend college provides a support basis for students which is lacking for many youths who are first generation college bound, which is likely to be the case for some immigrant and minority youths. The peer-network and social environment is less developed as a supportive instrument for non-college bound students who must depend more upon institutionalized outside assistance relative to information concerning college admissions. Only 15 percent of the college bound students cited counselors as a major source of information relative to college admissions compared to 25 percent of the non-college bound population.

White students indicated being less informed than minority students about financial resources available to cover the cost of college tuition. This may reflect the fact that, due to financial circumstances, fewer white students feel the need to seek information regarding financial aid.

When students were asked to whom they would turn *in school* if they were troubled, there was no significant difference between the college bound and the non-college bound. The two groups were split equally between counselors and teachers. My assumption is that personality differences and social factors between the student population probably account for this even split; one group of students having strong teacher/student relationships, the other lacking such a relationship and more prone to see a counselor when troubled.

Students indicated that they could see their counselors sooner but that they had closer personal relationships with their teachers than with their counselors.

In terms of race/ethnicity, minority respondants were significantly more likely to see a counselor when troubled; whites cited teachers more frequently. It is probable that most of the teachers are white and their identification with white students is much stronger than with minority students.

When students were asked to whom they would turn *outside* of the school when troubled, there was no significant difference between the college bound and the non-college bound. However, when this question is analyzed on the basis of race/ethnicity a significant difference is indicated. Minority respondants cite about equally family, teachers and counselors. This may reflect the pattern of instability found more frequently among minority families, which forces one outside the family for support.

Whites cite family much more frequently than teachers or counselors, and friends almost as often as counselors or teachers. This pattern is consistent with the more stable family pattern and peer-network system found among the white population in general.

RECOMMENDATIONS

School systems should study the availability of counselors for minority students and make the necessary adjustments to ensure that these students receive guidance that will enable them to not only solve personal problems and eliminate antisocial behavior, but help prepare them in every way to attend college.

School counselors should receive inservice training in interpersonal communication skills and cultural diversity.

Dr. Russell Kropp, Professor and Assistant to the Provost, Florida State University, and member of the Florida Institute of Education Advisory Board, offers his congratulations to Regent Cecil B. Keene.

LOUISE JOHNSON STREETE

WHAT IS THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE COUNSELING STUDENTS RECEIVE AND THE DECISION TO ATTEND COLLEGE?

REACTION

A review of the literature indicates a need for new, viable approaches to enhance black students' desires to attend college. There are many reasons why black students have not continued to enroll in college at rates comparable to previous years. The reasons include lack of interest on the part of students, college admissions policies which restrict access, and an overall decline for all population groups. A factor also bearing on the ability of blacks to attend college appears to be inadequate academic preparation as it relates to college entrance requirements.

According to a black former student of Gainesville High School, the major problem and concern of black students is the low concept that others have of their ability level. According to Lloyd (1983), when this occurs it results in low student expectations. Lloyd also states that teachers, counselors and administrators seem eager to assign black students to remedial classes or non-academic programs. They also seem to lack interest in whether these students learn or not. Black students can feel this negativeness that surrounds them. Therefore their attitude turns into an "I don't care, if they don't care" attitude (Lloyd, 1983).

Other black students have indicated to the writer that there are teachers who do not provide the same help and support for them as they provide for white students. Lloyd indicated that these students are often talked to in a cool, professional, snobbish way to let them know teachers could care less. Black students are not pushed or motivated to achieve academic excellence. These things sometimes cause blacks to think less of themselves and consequently achieve less than they otherwise would.

The writer feels that there are several reasons that the college bound pool of black students has declined. These include (1) lack of parental support; (2) lack of community support; (3) lack of student academic preparation; (4) lack of black role models; (5) teacher insensitivity to student interests and needs; and (6) teacher inability to motivate students.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Research has shown that black students experience a greater range of problems than those experienced by the majority student population. Consequently, educational institutions are desperately in need of more effective techniques to serve these students. The schools must focus attention on black students' individual differences, values, needs, and "frame of reference" to facilitate their personal and vocational development.

The writer realizes the importance of teachers' attitudes for success of any intervention to improve parents participation in their children's education; she is also aware that too often teachers exhibit negative attitudes which impede parent-teacher and student-teacher communication.

The writer further recognizes, however, that teachers should not have to implement activities for which they do not feel prepared. Thus, staff workshops in the area of human relations and interpersonal communication skills should be scheduled and conducted.

All activities should lead to an array of projects, opportunities, and positive interactions for black students. The most important focus should be the significant improvement of students' academic performance and achievement. This, above all, is perhaps the best indicator of successful entrance into college and the subsequent completion of a degree program.

The counseling students receive in preparing to attend college should be based on (1) building self-concepts; (2) developing positive attitudes toward school; (3) fostering parental participation in school activities; (4) improving academic skills so students may enjoy a successful college experience; and (5) encouraging students to attend college after completion of high school.

REFERENCES

Lloyd, R.G. (July-October 1983). The Major Problems and Concerns of Black Students. *The Negro Educational Review*, vol. 34, no. 3-4, 92-114.

JANET R. JOHNSON

WHAT IS THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF ACADEMIC PREPAREDNESS AND THE DECISION TO ATTEND COLLEGE?

REACTION

Most research indicates that what students believe influences their behavior. If they believe they are not academically prepared, then without some intervention they are unlikely to make a decision to attend college.

This hypothesis is borne out in the research study under consideration which shows that 70% of those students identifying themselves as college bound thought they were well prepared while only 39% of non-college bound students felt well prepared. In addition, 62% of non-college bound females and 39% of non-college bound males cited *lack of ability* for not going to college.

My experience in working with students in Upward Bound and Career Beginnings has proven over and over again that students' perceptions of self *can* be changed. In order to determine how the students perceive themselves, we use the "How I See Myself Inventory" developed by Ira Gordon. This instrument is administered twice a year. An ongoing intervention strategy involves the attitudes of teachers, counselors and significant staff toward the students. All participants are treated as if they are very bright and they start behaving that way — not initially for most — but over a period of a year we begin to see some change and after two years the students are more secure with themselves. "Success breeds success."

RECOMMENDATIONS

In order for effective change to occur there must be well-defined, planned interventions designed to alter students' perceptions of themselves and their abilities.

BENJAMIN F. CAMPBELL

WHAT ARE THE RELATIONSHIPS AMONG VARIABLES SUCH AS CLASS RANK, GPA, SAT/ACT TEST SCORES AND THE DECISION TO ATTEND COLLEGE?

REACTION

The relationship among variables such as class rank, GPA, SAT/ACT test scores and the decision to attend college is not one which lends itself well to predicting academic success. In fact, among these indicators, there is no single variable or combination of variables which guarantees academic success. While test scores in combination with GPA have long been used by admissions officers in the selection process, Richard Moll, in *The Public Ivys — A Guide to America's Best Public Undergraduate Colleges and Universities* (1985), states that even the most selective colleges in the country do not consider test scores the most important factor in admissions. Nonacademic predictors of success such as extracurricular participation, teacher and counselor recommendation, motivation, and intense commitment to goals are also used as selection criteria. Indeed, the latter of these, intense commitment to goals, has been cited by Cope and Hannah (1975), as significant in predicting success.

Open-door and non-selective colleges and universities have had a positive impact on minority student enrollment. Many of these institutions work with students whose nonacademic predictors are stronger than their academic predictors. In the early 1970s, one-half of the minority students entering higher education were starting at the community colleges. These are positive developments. However, people who talk to students about going to college do not provide enough information on predominantly black colleges and universities. The 1986 Rand Corporation study titled *Closing the Gap — Forty Years of Economic Progress for Blacks*, indicates that the dramatic improvement in the quality of black education is attributed to the improvement in the quality of black schools (not the perceived quality of education of blacks in desegregated schools).

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Parents, teachers and counselors must continue to advise students regarding the value of scholastic achievement and the opportunities students create for themselves by obtaining excellent GPAs and SAT/ACT test scores.
2. Students must be advised realistically as to the value of attending a community college.
3. "Significant others" should encourage students to attend community colleges which offer support services to minority students.
4. Counselors should provide more information to minority students on programs at predominantly black colleges.

REFERENCES

Cope, R. & Hannah, W. (1975). *Revolving College Doors: The Causes and Consequences of Dropping Out, Stepping Out, and Transferring.* New York: John Wiley and Sons.

Moll, R. (1985). *Public Ivy.* New York: The Viking Press.

Smith, James P., & Welch, Finis R. (1986). *Closing the Gap — Forty Years of Economic Progress for Blacks.* New York: The Rand Corporation.

SABRINA E. EATON

WHAT ARE THE RELATIONSHIPS AMONG VARIABLES SUCH AS STUDENTS' PARTICIPATION IN EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES OR OUTSIDE ENRICHMENT ACTIVITIES AND THE DECISION TO ATTEND COLLEGE?

REACTION

The conclusions of the study relevant to the importance of participation in extracurricular activities reveals that "college bound students are more often involved in extracurricular activities than non-college bound students." The fact that sixty-three percent (63%) of the college bound students cited participation in church, sports, or music activities compared to only 15% of the non-college bound students is significant. However, a closer examination of each variable may reveal that it does not necessarily have a direct relationship to the decision by the students to continue their education beyond high school.

On examination of the variable "participation in church activities" (the most frequently mentioned by college bound as well as non-college bound students), one can reason that this is not necessarily an influencing factor to attend college. First of all, our society stresses the separation of church and state and secondly, church attendance is usually influenced by the religious orientation of one's family and/or peers and does not necessarily have any correlation to school attendance (secondary and/or postsecondary).

"Sports activities" was the second highest extracurricular activity and was cited by approximately equal numbers of white and minority respondants. Here again, students may have many reasons for participating in sports. However, it can be safely assumed that there are some students who do engage in this activity with expectations of financing their college education with athletic scholarships.

The fact that music was cited as the third most frequent extracurricular activity (participated in by 63% of the college bound students), may be attributed to the fact that people participate in this activity for different reasons — travel, pleasure, or peer acceptance, just to name a few. It can be noted, however, that there are students who engage in band with expectations of attending a certain college in order to participate in a band program that enjoys a national or even international reputation.

Part-time jobs may be the means by which some students are enabled to go to college. However, these would be jobs where salaries are earned and not necessarily the non-paying "part-time jobs" held in the home by many minority students which are often required so that the parent(s) can work.

The negative effect that part-time jobs may have on students is substantiated in part by the following conclusions as stated in the study;

"While white students more often report having part-time work in addition to school, minority students more often had responsibilities for sibling care. Minority respondants also more often reported having household responsibilities. A by-product of these additional responsibilities may be a limiting effect on their level of participation in school and a consequent lack of feeling of belongingness."

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. More academic enrichment activities funded by the private and/or public sector could achieve some significant results in motivating students to attend postsecondary schools. This study was designed to identify some of the specific economic, motivational, and academic variables which may be barriers to increased black participation in postsecondary education. Consequently, it seems significant that a small percentage of students reported having participated in academic enrichment activities.
2. The study should be replicated using students in Florida's postsecondary institutions.

GERALDINE F. THOMPSON

WHAT ARE THE RELATIONSHIPS AMONG VARIABLES SUCH AS STUDENTS' PARTICIPATION IN EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES OR OUTSIDE ENRICHMENT ACTIVITIES, AND THE DECISION TO ATTEND COLLEGE?

REACTION

Involvement in extracurricular activities allows students to develop critical social and coping skills which are necessary for success in higher education. Whether students elect a community college or a four-year institution, they will find it essential to take responsibility for meeting their educational, personal and social needs. The failure to provide effectively for any of these needs will result in dissatisfaction with the educational endeavor and an inability to persist. High school students who are involved in sports, music, honor societies, debate teams, gospel choirs or other forms of extracurricular activities develop a team spirit which translates into a feeling of belonging within the education setting. Involvement in extracurricular activities also enables students to develop discipline and to set priorities. Most high schools require a certain standard of academic performance in order for students to become and to remain eligible for participation in extracurricular activities. Success in college studies requires self-discipline and experience in prioritizing a variety of options available for spending one's time. Extracurricular activities provide students an opportunity to succeed in the educational environment even in instances where academic performance is not the individual's greatest strength.

Feelings of belonging, experiences of success, prioritizing activities, exercising self-discipline, and feelings of self-reliance combine to make students feel more capable and desirous of pursuing higher education. Therefore, those students who have been involved in extracurricular activities are more likely to attend college. Participation in extracurricular activities often provides a financial means of supporting college studies through scholarships or stipends.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Secondary school counselors and other personnel should encourage disadvantaged and minority students to participate in enrichment or extracurricular activities.
2. Special attention should be focused on providing opportunities for extracurricular activities to students who live significant distances from school and who must adhere to bus schedules in order to return home from school.
3. Special college outreach and recruitment should be targeted toward extracurricular activities in which significant numbers of minority or disadvantaged students participate.
4. Supplemental academic instruction or support should be given to students who express interest in but are not eligible for participation in extracurricular activities due to substandard grades. This would enhance academic performance and assist students to achieve a feeling of belonging at the institution.

ARNETTA ROZALIA DAVIS

WHAT ARE THE RELATIONSHIPS AMONG VARIABLES SUCH AS PARENTAL EXPECTATIONS AND PEER INFLUENCES AND THE DECISION TO ATTEND COLLEGE?

REACTION

The findings of the study emphasize the importance of the College Reach-Out Program. The majority of students surveyed indicate they know that "college is necessary to get a good job." When trying to determine *who* influences the decision to attend college it was found that white parents encourage their children to attend college more frequently than minority parents; females' parents and friends encourage them to go to college more frequently than males' parents and friends, and non-college bound students are not encouraged to attend college by their parents and friends as frequently as college bound students are.

These findings reinforce the relevance of two specific goals of the College Reach-Out Program: (1) identifying and motivating students who do not realize the value of postsecondary education; and (2) the need to involve parents in counseling regarding the importance of postsecondary education and the availability of financial aid. Many parents do not know what to tell their children about college because they may not have attended college themselves.

The majority of the participants in the Reach-Out Program at FIU and many other institutions are female. Florida jails and prisons are full of youths (particularly black males) who have found negative and unlawful means of advancing economically. Many of these youths feel that they *know* of no other alternative to their behavior. Early and continuous counseling and supplemental instruction (two more Reach-Out goals) can help alleviate this problem, especially if the counseling and instruction is concerned with acceptable means of achieving economic and social mobility and stresses the positive relationship between proficient learning skills and economic and social success.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. When identifying Reach-Out participants, coordinators should make a deliberate attempt to mix college bound students with potential non-college bound students, and males with females. This could be achieved by:
   - selecting students with low grade point averages and high stanines;
   - selecting students in vocational tracks with high grade point averages;
   - selecting students in the bottom two thirds of their class with minimum 2.0 GPAs; and
   - requiring 45% of the students identified by participating schools, agencies and organizations to be males, if possible.
2. In order to increase the number of male participants in College Reach-Out programs, it is recommended that Reach-Out coordinators establish relationships with athletic coaches and local area parks and recreation program directors. The more these students excel in a given sport the more likely it is that they will be eligible for athletic scholarships. Participation in Reach-Out programs could become mandatory for continued participation in sports activities.
3. A full complement of parental education workshops should be developed to increase parents' awareness of the higher education process. These workshops should:

   (1) Teach parents how to establish a relationship with high school teachers, officials and counselors; (2) Inform parents of the timetable for preparing for college, beginning as early as ninth grade; (3) Describe various types of extracurricular activities that are beneficial to college bound students; (4) Teach parents how to complete applications for admission and financial aid; (5) familiarize parents with SAT *and* ACT test-taking strategies; and (6) teach parents how to evaluate and select a college.
4. For programs with field trip components to college campuses, parents should be encouraged to accompany their children in order to increase their own awareness of the college environment.

SEVILLA L. PHILLIPS

WHAT ARE THE RELATIONSHIPS AMONG VARIABLES SUCH AS PARENTAL EXPECTATIONS AND PEER INFLUENCE AND THE DECISION TO ATTEND COLLEGE?

REACTION

The study confirms a belief — most often based upon observation — of many counselors in precollegiate programs, that one of the major factors in students pursuing a college education is the family. More specifically, a student's choice to attend college immediately after graduation from high school can be attributed — to a large extent — to parental influence and expectations.

Data from the study, moreover, are consonant with some information provided to counselors by students in the TRIO Talent Search Program at Florida A & M University. Almost every individual in the program has indicated that they have made college and career choices that are predicated upon parental influence.

However, many students coming from low income families and families which report a paucity of familial predecessors who have availed themselves of postsecondary education, will either secure a job or enlist in the military following graduation from high school. The study identified these students as non-college bound. They become non-college bound immediately before or immediately after graduation. The problem often stems from the parents' lack of vision concerning postsecondary education and lack of knowledge about financial assistance available to students. Too often parents are inclined to believe that finances for college education will become solely their responsibility, or the student will have to become self-supporting. Furthermore, because children tend to gravitate toward the social and occupational status of their parents, students who come from lower-class families may believe that they will never move beyond their socioeconomic class, regardless of their educational accomplishment (Sewell et al., 1981).

The characteristics of the school itself must also be considered. Schools operate with middle-class values and tend to favor middle-class students. The inability to gain status formally by grades and academic success and informally in the hierarchy of peer groups measured by such symbols as money, clothes, manners and morals causes the individual to lose self-esteem (Larsen, 1988). This, too, can be a deterrent to a student's desire to continue education after graduating from high school. The study under consideration here clearly documents the notion that college attendance is influenced significantly by peers.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Provisions should be made for more student-counselor contact and more parent-counselor contact. According to the students identified earlier, a great number of seniors have had less than three contacts with their high school counselor since their freshman year in school. Unfortunately, these students have little or no instruction in preparing properly for college enrollment. As a result, these students are often left either to enlist in the military or get a job. Parents, moreover, are left unaware of factors that can promote successful matriculation for their son or daughter in college. The most important factors are availability of financial aid or scholarships and the progess of the student in high school. Since many minority students are from low income backgrounds and may live with a single parent, elderly parent or guardians, information about college may not be understood easily or even taken into consideration. Thus, the importance of contact between the counselor and the parent becomes critical.
2. A greater assessment of students' needs should be initiated by counselors in order to ensure that potential high school graduates will experience successful matriculation at postsecondary institutions.

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Participants listen and take notes during one of the conference presentations.

OMEGA S. GARDNER

WHAT ARE THE RELATIONSHIPS AMONG VARIABLES SUCH AS GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION (URBAN VS. RURAL), NUMBER OF SIBLINGS, FAMILY INCOME, PARENTS' LEVEL OF EDUCATION, AND THE DECISION TO ATTEND COLLEGE?

REACTION

Some of the issues surrounding this particular research question are those associated with socioeconomic status. Innumerable studies have documented the relationship between socioeconomic status and education. The specific socioeconomic variables addressed in this study are family structure and size, level of education of parents, and family income. The analyses of the family related socioeconomic variables reveals that education, occupation and the number of dependents are all significant predictors of whether or not a student will decide to pursue postsecondary education.

In addition to the family-related socioeconomic variables addressed above, this question was concerned with geographic location. The essential finding as it relates to geographic location is that the postsecondary education aspirations of urban students are higher than those of rural students, with more urban students intending to pursue their education beyond the bachelor's level.

The findings of this study are not surprising. Essentially, the socioeconomic variables studied, including geographic location, were found to be correlated positively with educational plans.

The question under consideration here is of significant importance to us as educators because a good college education can mean unobstructed access to social mobility. For any particular society, it is important to know the extent to which social mobility is possible and the means through which individuals can become successfully mobile. In the United States, educational attainment or the number of school years completed is the single most important determinant of occupation and income attainment.

It is for this reason that "equality of opportunity" is usually discussed in the context of education. "Equality of opportunity" exists when each person, regardless of such ascribed characteristics as family background, ethnicity, race, religion or gender, has the same chance of acquiring a favorable socio-economic position. If access to postsecondary education is not equal for all, equal access to occupations, financial success, and prestige will, consequently, be unattainable.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Many of the subjects participating in the study demonstrated a need for assistance in exploring and understanding career options and making appropriate academic preparations. Community colleges and universities should work with local school districts in the development of comprehensive counseling programs designed to improve the knowledge base of minority students, parents and guardians as it relates to career options, precollegiate academic preparation and postsecondary education opportunities. These counseling programs could make use of college work-study students, existing counselors, teachers and other community resources to provide minority middle school and senior high school students with specific information about career opportunities, appropriate course selection and postsecondary opportunities. A critical area in the improvement of minority student participation in postsecondary education is counseling. The need for counseling that was demonstrated by the subjects of this study is probably widespread. Comprehensive efforts could assist students in making informed choices related to educational preparation and career success.

MALINDA L. HAYES

WHAT ARE THE RELATIONSHIPS AMONG VARIABLES SUCH AS GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION (URBAN VS. RURAL), NUMBER OF SIBLINGS, FAMILY INCOME, PARENTS' LEVEL OF EDUCATION, AND THE DECISION TO ATTEND COLLEGE?

REACTION

Previous research in educational and social sciences literature clearly documents evidence which confirms the existence of a relationship between family structure, ethnic background, socioeconomic status, and academic achievement. Gall and Ward (1974), point out that:

> The success of any group of students in the United States regardless of age or locale, will depend upon several known factors. White students generally will be more successful than black students. Students from homes with a high income level will be more successful than students from homes with lower incomes. Students with one or more parents who achieved high success in school generally will be more successful than students whose parents had limited success (p. 115).

In terms of the impact of demographic variables, the findings of this study identified family structure as a significant factor in the decision to pursue postsecondary education. This result coincides with the findings of established research on the subject.

An interesting, but expected, outcome is the significance of the father's level of education and occupation, and the number of dependents as predictors of students deciding to pursue higher education. This finding bears directly on the educational status of black men as an at-risk population, economic opportunities for black men, and the socioeconomic position of current and future black families.

Although the high school graduation rate for black students has increased, the college attendance rate for black students — particularly for black males — has declined. Several articles in *The Chronicle of Higher Education* have addressed this issue. In a December, 1987, article "More Young Black Men Choosing Not to Go to College," Michelle Collison explained the alternatives to college attendance that black males are choosing: "Instead of going to college, they are choosing to enlist in the military, attend vocational and technical schools or take jobs" (p. A1). As long as black males remain conspicuously absent from college campuses, there will be fewer opportunities for them to be employed in professional, managerial, and high income yielding positions. Consequently, it is conceivable that without some intervention, the status of black males in higher education, and the status of black families in American society will continue to deteriorate.

A further consideration of family structure and its relationship to the decision to pursue postsecondary education is the impact of the single parent home. A very common view held by educators is the perception of the single parent home as an automatic liability to the academic success of children from these homes. However, this study offers evidence that some children from single parent homes do experience academic success and aspire to higher education. Nearly half of the subjects from single parent homes identified themselves as college bound. This evidence raises questions regarding the effect of single parent households on students' decisions to pursue postsecondary education. It seems reasonable to hypothesize that other variables such as the circumstances responsible for the parent's single status, the extent of the parent's education, parent's income level, parent's occupation, stability of the home environment, and support systems for parent and child in interaction with the parent's single status may be relevant factors.

The findings reveal that educational levels differed significantly between rural and urban fathers. Urban fathers were not likely to be employed in professional or managerial positions. Surprisingly, there were no significant differences in family income between urban and rural residents. There is also evidence within the context of this study which indicates that geographical regions impact on some variables associated with the decision to attend college.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Reach-Out and Upward Bound Programs can be vehicles for supplementing high school counseling efforts by providing orientations to college, financial aid workshops, and by providing encouragement and support for academic achievement in a postsecondary environment.
2. Community groups, sororities, fraternities, and churches should develop programs to provide mentors for young black men who may be uncertain about pursuing higher education.
3. Black students who achieve academically are frequently victims of the peer perceived "nerd" syndrome. Succeeding academically is perceived as basically "uncool," and students, particularly black males, are under a good deal of peer pressure to be "cool." Reach-Out Programs, Precollegiate Programs, and Upward Bound Programs can institute peer counseling programs as a support system against negative peer pressure.
4. More black males should be recruited for participation in academically oriented programs both within and extenal to the high school.
5. Community colleges and universities should develop programs for single parents with focus on parenting students for academic achievement. These programs or workshops should also be motivational in nature for parents who have the potential to enroll in and succeed in postsecondary education. Scholarships should be provided for these parents.
6. Churches should institute workshops focusing on male/female relationships, preparation for responsible roles as future parents, and emphasizing the status of the black family.
7. School systems should study Upward Bound as a program of success in terms of its ability to prepare students for college. Methods used by these programs could be implemented in the school system. Upward Bound has a proven track record. It works.
8. Reach-Out Programs and TRIO Programs should be increased and funded at realistic levels which will allow them to reach their fullest potential in providing services to students.
9. Teachers, administrators, and central office personnel at all levels should be required to participate in workshops in cultural diversity. These workshops should focus on sensitizing personnel to different segments of the population and teaching them how to accept rather than reject others different from themselves. Workshops of this nature should become a required part of the high school curriculum.
10. Schools of education should consider single parents with potential for postsecondary education as a pool for the recruitment and training of minority teachers. On-campus day care should be provided.

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MATTIE FOWLER MEDLOCK

WHAT IS THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN STUDENTS' FUTURE CAREER PLANS AND THE DECISION TO ATTEND COLLEGE?

REACTION

"What shall I do after graduation from high school?" is a question that everyone asks many times before finally receiving a high school diploma. That question is still being asked by many high school students and for most of them the decision is either to go directly to work or to go on to college. There are many variables that may affect the relationship between future career plans and the decision to attend college. The costs of a college education are getting higher and higher. High school graduation requirements are increasing as are general admission requirements for students to enter college, particularly our public universities. Moreover, financial aid requirements are becoming more difficult to comply with. And to compound the difficulty of that most important choice, the job market for college graduates is getting tighter and tighter.

A report from the Bureau of Labor Statistics indicates that only one fourth of the 16 million jobs generated in the United States economy will require a college degree; yet, employment in occupations requiring specialized postsecondary training is expected to increase significantly. Economists also predict that about one half of the job growth from now to 1995 will occur in only 40 of the 1,700 occupations for which the bureau has developed projections. Education is not at the top of the list among the forty. To be exact, kindergarten elementary teachers rank about 16th in the list of these occupations. As a result of changes in technology and demography, computer-related jobs head the list of these 40 occupations followed by service related occupations such as health workers, food services, repairmen, police, fire protection, delivery truck drivers, building maintenance, and factory equipment maintenance.

In spite of the fact that college costs are on the rise, that admissions requirements are becoming more rigid, that financial aid requirements are more difficult to meet, and that 80 percent of the 16 million jobs will not require a college degree by 1995, many students still report that attending college is very important to them and that they do plan to enroll and complete their studies.

William F. Shanahan indicates that many people choose college for reasons other than just preparing them for a career.

> College graduates bring many advantages to the labor market. They are in general intelligent, innovative, productive and flexible. They choose colleges to help break away from dependence on their parents, to meet new friends, to gain insight on academics outside their major, to enhance personal development; to gain the literacy to communicate with others and to prepare themselves to be parents and to become active citizens contributing to society and the community.

All of these factors contribute to the position that the relationship between students' future plans and the decision to attend college is positive.

In counseling students concerning their future, college almost always comes out to be among the top choices. Specifically, over the last three years, out of 600 graduates from this writer's school district, 270 (45 percent) of the students indicated that they were planning to attend college; 204 (34 percent) stated that they were going to work but plan to attend college later on in life; 48 (8 percent) planned to go to the military and later on to college; and 72 (12 percent) were undecided about career plans.

The results of the study also revealed that overall, 97% of the college bound students believed that college is either somewhat necessary or very necessary, compared to 90% of the non-college bound; consequently, there was no significant difference in their responses. When non-college bound students were asked if they had plans to continue their education in the future, 40% of the minority respondents said that they would attend later as compared to 25% of white respondents.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The College Reach-Out Program should continue the study of variables affecting high school seniors' decisions to elect or not to elect college as a step toward a viable career and provide services to help students recognize the value of a college education.
2. Prospective college bound students should be identified early and a program should be developed to assist these students and their parents in setting career goals and making career choices. Middle school students should be counseled extensively and counseling should continue through the 12th grade.

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Certificates of appreciation were awarded to student and parent panelists: (l-r) Cheryl McPhaul; Mayantwanette Jenkins; Victor Nathan; Lucretia Hicks; and Mrs. Martha Hicks. Mrs. Ethel Brooks, Dr. Jack Tebo, and Mr. Jack Leppert share in the presenation.

VANESSA GIBSON PALMORE

WHAT IS THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN STUDENTS' FUTURE CAREER PLANS AND THE DECISION TO ATTEND COLLEGE?

REACTION

Approximately 97% of the college bound students surveyed felt that college attendance would be instrumental in achieving their career goals. When one considers today's social and economic environment, that statistic indicates high school seniors are being realistic in assessing the job market.

As a consultant who has held various positions (teacher, job placement specialist, employment and career counselor, corporate account executive, public relations specialist), I find it very interesting that as educators we often leave out two essential reasons when encouraging our children to go to college...Money and Power. The students surveyed, like most high school students, realize that the more education one has the better chances are of getting a higher paying job, but I don't feel that they really understand the full long-term impact that a college education can have on their quality of life.

In academia we often don't focus in on *why* money and power are important and relevant to students' career plans and the decision to attend college. If we used the following rationale in discussing career goals, I believe more students would be interested in pursuing a college degree:

College Attendance = More/Better Education
Better/More Education = More Credentials
More Credentials = More Options/Opportunities
More Options/Opportunities = More Money
More Money = More Economic Power
More Economic Power = More Control over your own destiny

Ultimately, the more control that an individual has over their own destiny, the greater their chances are to improve the quality of their life.

I am uncertain as to who coined the original formula towards achieving success but I've found that it applies not only to the business world but to academia as well.

- Formula for Success = P. + I. + E.
- Success = Performance + Image + Exposure

Most of the time we concentrate primarily on Performance, which is only 10% of the formula. Image is 30% of the formula with the largest percentage on Exposure which is 60% of the formula to success. It is my contention that in order for our children to be successful in determining their life's work, we need to begin to expose them more to various opportunities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Align the school systems with the Private Industry Council. Focus in on the Drop Out Prevention Program and the Mentorship Program.
2. Encourage businesses and major corporations to actively participate in the schools in their communities. Some companies adopt schools and provide scholarships to encourage students to go on to college after high school.
3. Designate "Role Model Days" at the schools. Schedule speakers, special leadership workshops, and company demonstrations of their products.
4. Implement an "Adopt-A-Student" program. In order for this to be truly effective, have individual business and professional people enter into a contract or letter of agreeement with specific students. Begin with 9th grade students and continue with them through their freshman year of college. Also, begin with 12th grade students and follow them through the end of their senior year in college.

5. Expose students at the junior and senior high school level to various career/occupational interest tests or surveys at each grade level. Utilize the results of the tests/surveys to counsel students in making course selections.
6. Develop a computerized counseling program that matches students' career/occupational interests with specific courses given at the school. Allow students access to the computerized program and make it mandatory that they go through this process prior to seeing a counselor to finalize their course selections.

These are only a few of the programs that can be implemented within the schools. It is time for educators to make sure that we focus not only on the basics, but utilize creative and innovative programs to ensure that our children get the proper balance of performance, image, and exposure to be truly successful.

Dr. Robert Belle (standing) makes a presentation as panelists listen. Panelists: (l-r) Mary Smith; Vanessa Palmore; Mattie Medlock; Malinda Hayes; Sabrina Eaton; and Rozalia Davis

ROBERT L. BELLE, JR.

WHAT IS THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN STUDENTS' KNOWLEDGE OF FINANCIAL AID AND THE DECISION TO ATTEND COLLEGE?

REACTION

The general notion that students who are not college bound are less informed about financial aid than students who are college bound was not substantiated in this study. The results of this study show no significant difference between these two groups relative to knowledge of financial aid.

The common perception that the major source of financial aid for both college bound and non-college bound students would be the high school guidance counselor was not found to be true in this study. Both groups felt that brochures were the major source of information regarding financial aid for college.

The perception that fewer minority students than white students would report that they would finance their education through scholarships was not verified in this study. In this study more minority students than white students reported that they would rely on scholarships. These findings, apparently, appear to be quite different from common perceptions.

Surprisingly, 10% of minority respondants stated that they were not informed about financial aid, while 23% of white students stated that they were not informed. This was significant at the .001 level.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Other means of informing students about financial aid should be explored. A marketing firm should be asked to develop alternative methods to inform parents and students about financial aid (i.e., flyers on trays in fast food establishments, billboard signs). Since many youths are media conscious, the electronic media should be used to inform students about financial aid. Radio stations should be asked to develop attractive Public Service Announcement (PSAs) about college financial aid. Local celebrities and role models such as athletes, media personalities, and politicians should be asked to make PSAs about college attendance and financial aid.
2. Appropriate financial aid information should be developed and made available to parents and students beginning in the 7th, 8th, and 9th grades. The assumption that financial aid should only be distributed to high school juniors and seniors should be abandoned.
3. Financial aid workshops for parents and students should be conducted in the local communities. Workshops should take place not only in high schools but also in churches, recreation centers, and social clubs.
4. Additional research should be conducted to examine the variable of gender as it relates to students' knowledge of financial aid and the decision to attend college.

MARY SMITH

WHAT IS THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN STUDENTS' KNOWLEDGE OF FINANCIAL AID AND THE DECISION TO ATTEND COLLEGE?

REACTION

For many high school students, the unavailability of financial aid is a major deterrent to matriculation at postsecondary institutions. Welki & Navratil (1987), found that financial aid affects not only a student's decision to attend college, but also what college the student attends. Their research found financial aid to be the third most important factor influencing students' decisions about college matriculation.

The financial aid process is complex and changes annually. The various types of financial aid include scholarships, grants, loans and work. Scholarships may be based on academic performance, special talents, financial need or non-need. Grants are need-based. Three loan programs are available through the federal aid program. The Guaranteed Student Loan (GSL) and the Perkins Loan are need-based. The PLUS/SLS Loan program is a non-need-based program. The work program is also need-based. Some grants, loans and work funds (campus-based aid) are limited. The GSL, PLUS/SLS and Pell Grant funds are unlimited for students who qualify.

I concur with the research findings of the study under consideration that brochures provide the major source of financial aid information for high school students. At Florida State University, over 20,000 financial aid application packets a year are mailed to prospective students.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. A concerted effort should be made to expand students' and parents' financial aid knowledge. This should be done early enough to enhance academic performance. Experience has shown that high school students have little more than a cursory knowledge of financial aid. General financial aid information and guidelines are the same regardless of the institution a student plans to attend. Counselors, out-reach staff, students, and parents should be encouraged to utilize the services available through community college and university financial aid offices in order to help them understand the many complexities of various financial aid opportunities.
2. Campus-based aid is limited and often awarded on a first-come first-serve basis. Consequently, counselors, out-reach staff, and concerned others should encourage students to apply immediately following January 1 of their senior year. Because each institution has different document requirements, the *best* advice for students would be to contact the financial aid office of the institution of their choice.
3. Financial aid administrators should be encouraged to develop "awarding methodology" procedures that give preference to students with high need. Humphries (1987), found that there has been a 20% decrease in grants awarded to black students between 1977 and 1984 at state universities. He noted that work awards had decreased also.

AFTERWORD

Financial aid funds are available for those students needing assistance. Perhaps, a more critical question to be addressed is "What effect does the type of financial aid have on a student's admission decision and subsequent retention?" Olson & Rosenfeld (1984), found that persons from low income backgrounds are resistant to borrowing for purposes of financing a college education. Crawford (1966) and Astin (1975) found that student loans were related to an increased likelihood of withdrawal. Astin (1975), also concluded that loans were most detrimental to retention.

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ROSALYN M. KING
PRESIDENT
INFORMATION RESEARCH NETWORK SERVICE

REACHING GREATER HEIGHTS: AN EVALUATION SUMMARY OF THE 1988 COLLEGE REACH-OUT CONFERENCE

OVERVIEW

The Second Annual College Reach-Out Conference builds upon last year's developmental foundation. Continual development will contribute to greater clarity and understanding about the research issues, target populations served, program needs, appropriate assessment mechanisms and the budget required.

CONFERENCE SUMMARY

A wealth of information and dialogue was generated at this conference. Three high points of the conference included: 1) presentation of the research findings along with selected case profiles from the statewide study of high school seniors' perceptions of postsecondary education, conducted by the Florida Institute of Education, 2) a panel discussion of program impact on student participants and parents, and 3) the Distinguished Lecture Series with The Honorable Bill Clinton, Governor of Arkansas, as guest lecturer.

Moreover, three distinguished experts served as keynote and luncheon speakers during the conference. These speakers included a member of the Florida State Board of Regents, a Senior Policy Analyst on vocational educational issues from Washington, D.C., and Special Assistant to the Chancellor, the Florida State Board of Regents. Conference presenters, panelists and participants covered many areas of discussion. Listed below are some of the major points, recommendations and suggested strategies.

Major Points

I. Education is the key

- The acquisition of education remains important. Young people must continue to be encouraged to obtain as much education as is possible.

II. High School and College Enrollment Efforts are Increasing

- Blacks and the poor are making greater efforts to receive a college education.
- The decision to attend or not attend college is not significantly influenced by the student's type of family structure; that is, two-parent versus single-parent families.
- Black students are enrolled in high schools at a higher rate, but this rate drops dramatically by the time of graduation.
- Black enrollment in high school and college has remained fairly constant over the past few years.

III. Parents Are Concerned

- Greater effort must be made to work with parents more effectively. Parents want the best education for their children; although all parents are not equipped to provide them with detailed guidance, information and knowledge about how to proceed. Further, the majority of black students' parents have smaller incomes than white students.

IV. College Reach-Out and Churches Provide Important Linkage and Support

- The College Reach-Out programs across the State of Florida have provided a tremendous link for many young people and their parents. Further, local churches have played a significant role in students' aspirations and motivation.

V. There Are Definitive Factors Influencing College Attendance

- There are many factors seemingly influencing students' decisions to attend or not attend college. Among these factors are academic, motivational, economic, and demographic differences. Further, there are race and sex differences.
- Other influences on a student's college aspirations were linked to counselors. The extent of the impact of this relationship is unknown. In addition, involvement in extracurricular activities influences college aspirations.
- A peer network seems to predominate relative to students' gaining information about college.
- There is evidence, even in 1988, that stereotypical institutional perceptions and the self-fulfilling prophecy syndrome is still prevalent.
- Institutions of high education place a significant amount of emphasis on quantitative factors like grades and test scores, and an insufficient amount of emphasis on nonacademic predictors of success.

VI. Particular Groups Need Special Attention

- Black males are an at-risk population requiring special attention. The lack of attention to this particular subgroup will have long-term acute impact on future family formation and stability.

Governor Clinton's lecture on economic development and educational policy called for the need to create a new world economic order and to promote more economic growth at home. He also stressed the importance and role of education and the initiatives local and state government and private sector entities must take.

Recommendations/Strategies

- The funding level of College Reach-Out needs to be increased tremendously. Legislators must be approached and influenced to increase funding for Reach-Out programs.
- There is a need for a special career counselor and a special academic counselor in schools to address students' specific career and college needs. Also, other tutors, mentors and role models are needed. In relation to this, there is a need to provide more one-on-one contact on a consistent basis.
- Mechanisms and strategies need to be developed to assist students with development of more positive self-concepts and projections. A particular focus should be placed on increasing the self-image of black males.
- College Reach-Out must be expanded to the middle schools.
- Increase support programs for parents. Develop orientation sessions on recruitment strategies, college information, standardized test-taking, registration procedures, financial aid and admission application processes. In addition, increase parent involvement in field trips.
- All school personnel, as well as students, should be required to take a course in cultural differences.
- In an effort to encourage college attendance, schools should develop marketing and recruitment strategies similar to those of the military.
- Increase and broaden information dissemination about the College Reach-Out Program.
- Existing school counselors need to develop more well-planned structured group sessions with students about college and careers.
- Counselors need to schedule in-service, orientation, and other networking and information sharing sessions with teachers to promote greater collaboration.
- Explore adding specific program components designed to build or strengthen communication and public speaking skills of students.

PARTICIPANTS' FEEDBACK

Conference participants were asked to rate on a scale from 5 (strongly agree) to 1 (strongly disagree), specific indicators about technical and substantive aspects of the conference including content, format, presentations, presenters, level of understanding and usefulness. They also were asked to make recommendations and suggestions for improvement. Finally, participants were asked to provide an overall rating of the conference, ranging from excellent to very poor.

Of those responding, the majority rated the conference overall as being excellent (65.3 percent), with more than half (53 percent) responding with 5 ratings and 47 percent responding with 4-3 ratings. The majority indicated that sessions were well-organized, informative and useful. Further, participants cited as most useful, the following: 1) the opportunity to interact with colleagues and exchange information about their programs, as well as the question and answer periods held during the general sessions; 2) the presentation and discussion of the research; 3) the generation of new ideas and strategies; and 4) listening to the program's impact on students and parents, based on their program involvement.

A large proportion of participants recommended that future conferences include smaller working/strategy groups. Moreover, suggestions were made to convene the next conference in the State's Capital (Tallahassee) and extend an invitation to key legislators and other pertinent State officials.

EVALUATOR'S COMMENTS

This year's conference had an excellent level of participation, with many program staff and other conference participants raising many questions and making significant comments and recommendations. In addition, there was a broad range and mix of conference attendees. These included State officials, management consultants, university administrators, faculty, staff and students; and high school personnel, students and parents.

Greater clarity was evident throughout the conference reflecting the specific needs and goals of the College Reach-Out Program. Further, the presentation of national data with statistical profiles of the State provided a clearer conceptual framework and understanding of pertinent educational and economic indicators as compared to the nation.

The physical facilities and environment of the Conference were conducive to the work. Facilities were comfortable and convenient. In addition, there were excellent leisure time facilities for relaxation and enjoyment.

This evaluator recommends that future Conferences be extended to at least two (2) full days and possibly three (3). This would allow for additional time for the various programs from across the state to share, interact and exchange implementation and intervention strategies or to gain advice and support.

The Conference staff is to be commended for excellent performance. Not only was the Conference well organized and focused, but staff members were supportive and helpful throughout the meetings. All of the essential ingredients are contained in this unique program and group of people to make reaching greater heights exciting, challenging and achievable.

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